LIBRARY
STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE
JOHNSON CITY, TENNESSEE

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

VOL. LXXXXX NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30, 1939 NUMBER 1291

Two Billion Pawns

Not for a long time has such a paralyzing piece of news struck the world as the announcement of the Russo-German treaty of non-aggression. While many people had predicted something of the sort, the secret was so well kept that there was no inkling that it was imminent. In an editorial on page 88 of this issue we offer our interpretation of its significance. In this place we would only point out how completely the world is at the mercy of one or two men. No one can doubt that in Germany only Hitler would dare make such a momentous decision, one which contradicts so utterly his long anti-Comintern crusade. In Soviet Russia the final responsibility was mainly Stalin's. There are about two billion people in the world and today they are all in some measure the pawns of two.

Echoes of an Earthquake

In the midst of the astonishment with which the Moscow-Berlin rapprochement was received in London and Paris, three speculations arose, one of which seems to us a feeble hope, and the other two well grounded. The first was that perhaps Stalin would continue to negotiate a military alliance with Berlin and France, regarding the non-aggression pact with Germany as no obstacle and using it merely as a means of pressure to gain his full terms. The pact might be non-operative in case Germany attacks a third power; other such agreements are written this way. The second, on the dark side, is that Mussolini will use the opportunity to renew and press his demands on France. And the third, which offers some consolation, is that Japan will lose the support of the Rome-Berlin axis and hence will be more conciliatory to Britain and the United States. Certainly, whatever happens to other powers, Italy is strengthened and Japan weakened by the new development.

Railroad Wrecks and Wrecked Railroads

Two railroad accidents have taken place within a week of each other on opposite sides of the continent. One produced a heavy loss of life; in both, the causes seem somewhat mysterious. One road, the Southern Pacific, set up a great outcry about sabotage, but in view of the difficulty of identifying and finding the culprit and other suspicious circumstances the charge seems dubious on the face of it. Months ago, railroad experts began to talk about the likelihood of accidents due to under-maintenance. This means in plain English that not enough money is being spent for men and materials to keep roadbed and equipment in a perfectly safe condition. The railroads are hard up; but when they plead their poverty, it is well to remember that they are still pouring out vast sums of money to owners of securities—all of them, of course, "widows and orphans." Many of these securities never represented physical assets. They were based on hope and blue sky and the sky has now turned gray. Meanwhile, the roads continue to resist the efforts at Washington to "put them through the wringer," and scale down their obligations to a sum that they can meet out of revenue.

CONTENTS

The Week 85

Editorials
- Stalin's Munich 88
- Wages Aren't Too High 89
- Democracy or Chautauquacy? 90
- Do Cheap Books Get Reviewed? 91

General Articles
- Lenin's "The State and Revolution" . . . . . Max Lerner 92
- Father Coughlin's Platoons . Alson J. Smith 96
- Who Am I? . . . Oliver H. P. Garrett 98
- Huey's Louisiana Heritage . Hamilton Basso 99
- Czechia Under the Nazis . F. C. Weiskopf 100
- Washington Notes . . . . T. R. B. 102
- Other People's Money . . John T. Flynn 103
- Vanguard Underground . . . Otis Ferguson 104
- The Bandwagon 105

Correspondence 105

Veblen on the Munich Pact . . Walton Hamilton 107

Books in Review
- The Death of the Soil . John Chamberlain 108
- Hell's Orchards . . . . . Ella Winter 109
- The Oxford Keats . . . Edmund Wilson 110
- Little Italy . . . . . Jerre Mangione 110
- Democracy at War . . . C. Hartley Grattan 111
- New Books: A Reader's List 111

PUBLISHED WEEKLY AND COPYRIGHT, 1939, IN THE U.S.A. BY EDITORIAL PUBLICATIONS, INC., 40 EAST 49TH ST., NEW YORK, N. Y.
ENTERED AS SECOND CLASS MATTER, NOVEMBER 6, 1914, AT THE POST OFFICE AT NEW YORK, N. Y., UNDER THE ACT OF MARCH 3, 1879

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

More and Better Thanksgivings

The good people who are disturbed by the President's decision to have Thanksgiving a week earlier this year because the last Thursday in November happens to fall on November 30 have queer ideas as to what the holiday is for. Some think it was invented for football games, which are thrown all out of schedule by the change. Others cherish the quaint idea that it is an occasion for rendering gratitude for divine providence, but only Pollyannas would take this seriously in 1939, and anyway if you felt thankful enough you could do it a week earlier. Those who think of the festival as a patriotic survival of Pilgrim tradition may have some justified complaint at interference with hallowed custom, but they are probably few in comparison with the masses who simply want a day off from school, office or factory and a chance to have a big meal of turkey. Thanksgiving, however, derives its real importance in the modern American world from the fact that it marks the beginning of Christmas shopping. Give people another week to buy presents, and they may buy more. But the reform is a halfway measure. What the country needs is a Thanksgiving day on the first, and a Christmas on the twenty-fifth of every month.

The World's Fair Goes Broke

The New York World's Fair is having serious financial trouble, as John Flynn points out in his article in this issue. There are various reasons for this, of which we can think of several. (1) Grover Whalen doesn't really understand how the other nine-tenths live. He scared them off by a seventy-five-cent admission charge, and by reports of restaurants which ask fantastic prices. There are plenty of inexpensive eating places, but these never got into the news. (2) The Fair has been overballyhooed from the beginning. Promises were made of such vast crowds that people stayed away lest they be trampled under foot. The New York papers printed enormous masses of publicity daily; you couldn't read it all and still have time for a trip to Flushing Meadows. And described at great length, the Fair inevitably sounded dull. (3) The theme of the Fair, the "World of Tomorrow," was too pretentious; people soon discovered that little attempt was made to live up to it, that nowhere on the grounds could you get a comprehensive idea of new textiles, materials, inventions, discoveries, that it was mostly just a press agent's catch phrase. We hope Mr. Whalen will take his lessons to heart, and put the Fair—which is really a good show—on a better footing for the summer of 1940.

The AFL and the Actors

Two important questions are before the executive council of the American Federation of Labor as a result of the confusing fight among the theatrical unions. First, it has to decide whether it can allow racketeering unionism, as represented by powerful elements in the IATSE, the stage hand and movie technicians' union, to gain a foothold among the actors, who have always fought against it. Second, the AFL has the problem of satisfying or losing the more progressive theatrical unions within its fold—the new American Guild of Variety Artists, the Screen Actors' Guild, Actors' Equity, Chorus Equity, and others composing the Associated Actors and Artistes of America (the Four A's). So far the executive council has completely mishandled the affair. If the final decision does not meet the principal terms of the actors' unions, they are prepared to pull out of the AFL, either to form an independent organization or to join the CIO.

In general, we have been enthusiastic about the growth of the CIO. At the same time, we are sorry to see progressive unions withdrawing from the AFL, because if this process continues the AFL will be deprived of all but its reactionary elements. A split in the theatrical labor movement can be avoided. The AFL needs to put the stage hands' union firmly in its place and supervise its much needed housecleaning. Then the minor squabbles among the variety artists, night-club and circus performers—which are largely quarrels over personalities—can be adjusted with comparative ease.

Colorado Breaks a Strike

The more we hear about the recent strike on the Green Mountain Dam, in Colorado, the more disturbing it seems. Colorado state authorities and business men in the strike area, according to reliable witnesses on the spot, showed an ominous recrudescence of vigilante spirit. The Governor called out the National Guard on little or no justification. Local business men were hastily sworn in as deputy sheriffs, and started shooting at the unarmed union pickets, of whom six were wounded. A bridge was dynamited just as a truckload of union sympathizers was about to cross it, which looks as though someone hoped the charge would go off while the truck was on the bridge. Strikers' families were evicted from their houses and the state-highway police were ordered to bar the roads to union men. Perhaps the La Follette Civil Liberties Committee had better stop over in Colorado for a few days on its way to California to look at the Associated Farmers.

The Catholics and Father Coughlin

Not every Catholic, by any means, approves of Father Coughlin and the anti-Semitism and pro-Nazism of the Christian Front, which are described by Alson J. Smith in his article on page 96 of this issue. We welcome the news of the Committee of Catholics for Human Rights, recently established at 55 West Forty-second Street, New York City. This committee is publishing The Voice, devoted to fighting Cough-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

linism. In its pages appear dozens of expressions of Catholics, from His Holiness the Pope downward, attacking anti-Semitism and the racial doctrines of the Fascists. Remember The Voice next time you are tempted into the easy generalization that the Catholic Church is fascist.

Bad Housekeeping

When anybody meets a charge with the reply that the criticism is really inspired by Reds, it is well to regard him with suspicion; he probably could not think of a rational defense. This is the case with Good Housekeeping Magazine, against which the Federal Trade Commission has charged "misleading and deceptive acts and practices." Throughout its advertising pages the magazine carries the statement, "Every product guaranteed as advertised—see page 6." But when you turn to page six you find that the guarantee merely means that the product will be replaced or money refunded if it is "defective." But it may have no physical defect and still not live up to the promise of the advertisement. The Trade Commission charges that "grossly exaggerated and false claims" have been made for products advertised in Good Housekeeping; for example, rayon has been described as silk and other false claims are charged in connection with foods, cosmetics and medicines. Richard Berlin, executive vice-president for Hearst Magazines, Inc., has issued a blanket denial of all these charges and blamed them on "radical and communistic groups in and out of the government service," whose purpose is "to destroy the freedom of the American press by first destroying its principal source of revenue." It's not very good publicity to spread the impression that the Reds are more solicitous of consumers' interests than are business men.

North of the Pyrenees

Exhausted and starving, refugees are still coming over the Pyrenees from Franco's Spain, even into a France they know will put them behind barbed wire and perhaps send them back. Representatives of the Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign estimate that they are arriving in the region of Perpignan at the rate of twenty a day. Yet the relief committees are already taxed to the utmost. The American traveling dispensary —which gave medical treatment to nearly ten thousand women and children in the month of July—ceased operating August 1 for lack of funds. Though sixteen thousand refugees have been admitted for settlement in Latin-American countries (chiefly Mexico and Chile) and twenty thousand more are expected to go by the end of November, thousands will still remain in France to suffer the hardships of winter in addition to exile.

To feed the newly arrived refugees the relief committees need $5,000 by September 1. To carry on their work in the military camps they need $20,000. To resume operation of the mobile dispensary they need $2,000. Their agency in this country is the Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign, 381 Fourth Avenue, New York City. A single dollar sent to it may mean the difference between life and death for a Spanish ex-soldier, or his wife or his child.

Fashion Muse

Parisian fashion styles are a sort of forest muse, properly mentioned only in the hushed chants of silvan elves. So Madame di Pombo of the House of Paquin announces a new creation, Cinamomo, "slim as a tree trunk, the fabric embracing the figure like a silken bark." Her phrases enchant us; inside we hear the nightingale warbling plaintive accompaniment to the poetry of style.

But shortly the melody is shattered. Mrs. Adam Gimbel, the fashion expert of Saks Fifth Avenue, reports that corsets are coming back. "Beautiful corsets," to be sure, which lace up the back and are complete with whale-bones and hip-padding of net and lace. The slim tree trunks are lumped with galls, the tender bark choked with net and lace. We must abandon our hope of seeing a cool Birnam Wood migrating neatly up Madison Avenue. Back to work, Fool! Will there be war in central Europe?

News Notes of a Week

Diplomats throughout the world were stopped in their tracks on August 22 with the news that Germany and Russia were about to sign a mutual treaty of non-aggression. In the Far East the dragged-out discussions between Great Britain and Japan halted until the negotiators could adjust themselves to the new situation, which caught the British completely by surprise. The rumors that President Roosevelt was about to make a statement urging peace in Europe suddenly stopped. . . . Negotiations between the United States and Mexico over the oil question continued, but in an increasingly discouraging atmosphere. It was announced that in future foreigners investing money in Mexico must be ruled entirely by Mexican law. . . . By a majority of four votes out of seven, the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations expressed its disapproval of the new British plan for Palestine. . . . Egypt recognized Soviet Russia.

At home, the Dies Committee investigated Nazi activities in America, turning up information most of which it had already turned up four or five times before. . . . Henry Ford and Inland Steel continued their familiar fight against the National Labor Relations Board. . . . The Tennessee Valley Authority and a group of Tennessee cities and towns bought out Commonwealth and Southern for $78,000,000 of which the TVA's share was nearly $45,000,000. . . . Maury Maverick in San Antonio advocated the doctrine, novel in Texas, that Communists have a right to assemble and make speeches.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stalin's Munich

EVER SINCE THE FIRST preparation of the current European crisis months ago, the world has been wondering whether the course of events would result in another Munich. The question has been answered in the affirmative, but with a surprise twist in that the surrender has not been made by Chamberlain. This time it was Stalin's turn. The announcement of the German-Russian non-aggression pact and trade treaty can mean nothing except that the Soviet Union has turned a cold shoulder to Britain and France at the critical moment, and has abandoned Poland to Hitler, just as at Munich Russia was thrust into the outer darkness by Chamberlain and Daladier, and Czecho-Slovakia was sacrificed. Hitler has twice succeeded in his main strategy of keeping his great potential enemies apart while he continues to snatch up his piecemeal conquests.

Writing on the heels of the news, we cannot know exactly what the outcome may be. One thing is certain; Hitler is definitely committed to regaining Danzig and the Corridor. He probably would not have turned back even if the Soviet armies had been against him, but he has known for weeks that they would not be, and he certainly will not retreat now. He may even enlarge his demands. Will Poland surrender without a blow? Will she undertake a hopeless resistance? In either case Hitler will achieve his immediate objective. Will Britain and France fight nevertheless to stop Hitler at this point, and to reconstitute a shattered Poland? They may, but it seems unlikely—especially in view of the fact that the naval blockade would not be effective so long as Germany could buy Russian oil and ore and wheat.

The parallel between Chamberlain's action in September, 1938, and Stalin's in August, 1939, is extraordinarily close. Each had good superficial reasons for his action. In the face of Hitler's determined threats, both surrenders seemed to save the peace of the world. Britain was not explicitly bound to fight for Czecho-Slovakia; the Soviet Union of course has no ties of historic friendship or of moral responsibility for Poland, a nation that has from the beginning been bitterly hostile to her. Deep antagonism and distrust between English Tories and Russian Communists have continually underlain their alternate wooing of each other. Chamberlain doubted Russia's help in the September crisis; Stalin thinks Chamberlain untrustworthy and the resolution of the democracies uncertain. Perhaps he believes that they are doomed anyway. At Munich Chamberlain tried, by sacrificing Czecho-Slovakia, to divert Hitler's attention from the West and direct his aggression toward the Ukraine. Now Stalin turns the tables by appeasing Hitler at the expense of Britain and France; they are isolated as Russia was before. Chamberlain hoped by making an enduring peace with the Reich to free his hands for protection of imperial interests in the Far East; Stalin is now relieved of the Japanese menace and can deal with her in Mongolia and China.

But the intangible and long-term effects of Stalin's decision are likely to be as disastrous as those of Chamberlain's. Hitler is strengthened in every way. He has not given up his drive for world power. He has performed another miracle, and his prestige at home will be enormously augmented. His faith in himself and in his mission will be doubly reinforced. The military and economic resources of the Reich are again enlarged; nothing now stands between her and complete domination of all Central Europe. The agreement with Moscow will offer no protection against aggression at Soviet expense whenever Hitler is ready for it. Relations between London and Paris on the one hand and Moscow on the other are irreparably damaged; Stalin has put the finishing touches on what Chamberlain began; it is doubtful if they can get together again for years even in time of supreme need.

The moral prestige of the Soviet government will be injured both at home and abroad just as Chamberlain's action dealt a heavy moral blow at the prestige of the British government. For years the Communist movement has been preaching collective security; though Chamberlain gave this doctrine a mortal wound, he and his faction had never been among its chief supporters and he has lately tried to resuscitate it in limited form. But now it lies slain at the hands of its chief supporter. The line of the Soviet press and theatre and of the Communist International for years has been consistently and powerfully anti-Nazi; to this line the Comintern has adjusted all its policy—its coöperation in united and popular fronts, its renewed interest in democracy as a bulwark against fascism; its support of Spain; its defense of the independence of small nations and subject peoples. Informed opinion had suspected that there might be a new policy. But that policy was announced without any preparation whatever in the molding of public opinion, either at home or abroad. Some rationalization will be discovered and some new line will be promulgated, no doubt. But Russian opinion, and opinion throughout the Communist International, will be confused and disheartened. The anti-Stalin opposition will be jubilant and will redouble its efforts. More treason in the Soviet Union and more suppression of treason or so-called treason is likely. Non-Communists throughout the world who had been sympathetic with the Soviet regime and friendly toward its recent line, but already

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

chilled by the political trials, will be further puzzled and alienated.

We do not expect that out of this appeasement will grow that great bogey—an offensive and defensive alliance between Soviet Communism and German Nazism, any more than a firm partnership between Britain and the Reich grew out of Munich. It is necessary not to derive more meaning from the event than there is in it. On the contrary, it seems to us that Hitler will go on playing his self-destined role, and that this in the end will bring him into conflict with the Soviet Union. Will it do so before or after he has reduced the Western nations to second-class powers? We do not know, but we do know that Hitler will use all his ingenuity to avoid having to fight both east and west at once. So far, he has got away with it, and he may continue to do so. If he does, German domination of Europe is certain. If he does not, the world war will eventually come, with Hitler in an immensely strengthened position to wage it.

Finally, there is a lesson for the United States. It is that we should continue to be distrustful of idealistic slogans, interested propaganda and simple-minded divisions among "good" and "bad" nations. European affairs are still full of insincerity, devious methods, secrets and surprises, and we should not be taken aback at any treachery or weakness. The utmost possible realism and wariness must govern our action in relation to foreign affairs. It will now be argued that since the British Empire is deprived of Russian military help, we must step in to save it. Maybe so, but in that case let us make the decision in terms of hard skepticism and not because of an ideological crusade. And in the meantime let us remember that if what is really dear to us is the promise of democracy, we shall have to fulfill it at home or not at all.

Wages Aren't Too High

A RECENT ARTICLE in The Economist of London about American economic conditions has caused a good deal of discussion in this country. The article has been cited in editorials by both The Times and Tribune of New York, and possibly other papers as well, as authority for the conclusion that wage rates in this country are too high and constitute the obstacle to full recovery. Little of the discussion, however, represents accurately the argument of the article itself, still less a critical examination of its conclusions.

What does the article say? It begins by pointing out that the course of business activity in this country has always been erratic and hard to predict. There is now no sign that the current recovery will go any higher than that culminating in 1937. The explanation of lack of sustained recovery, continues the anonymous writer, is that there is not enough investment of new capital. This lack is commonly attributed to the fact that the United States is a "mature economy" with a slackening population growth. Therefore it is argued by New Dealers that large public investment is needed in order to make up for the slowing-down of private business expansion.

The author admits that there is such a thing as a mature economy, in which investment slows down, with resulting unemployment, and that in such an event large-scale public works are justified. But he thinks the inevitability of this development in the United States at present is greatly exaggerated. Great Britain has an even more mature economy than ours, yet she has just had a period of marked expansion. The volume of private investment that will be undertaken depends on other things as well—such as the interest rate and the apparent profitability of the new investment. Interest rates in the United States are low enough, but new investment is discouraged because of lack of profitability.

What leads to the low profits? The author poohpoohs the usual complaints of the business community. The cause is not taxation, or the hostile attitude of the administration, or the big deficit. Nor is there any politically inspired "strike of capital." The reason, thinks the author, is the high cost of capital goods—such as buildings, steel, machinery.

At this point he brings in his discussion of wages. "In American industry generally, and more especially in the construction industry, the cost of labor has been forced up to a very high level." According to the National Industrial Conference Board, average hourly earnings in American industry rose 23 percent between 1929 and 1938. In reference to the movement of wholesale prices, they have increased 49 percent. Yet, on account of unemployment, the total amount of money paid out in wages fell 18½ percent in the same period. In Britain, wage rates rose much less than here, but payrolls increased. This suggests "the possibility that, as a result of shorter hours and correspondingly increased hourly wage rates" in the United States, "the cost of capital goods has been pushed up so high that the payrolls of the working class as a whole are not sufficient to support them."

With this analysis we are in substantial agreement up to the point where wages are mentioned. But before we deal with the question of the high cost of capital goods and its relationship to wages, it would be well to bring into the picture a few refinements of the facts as to the actual investment of capital in this country. Studies by the National Bureau of Economic Research have shown that in our recovery since the start of the New Deal there has been a marked revival of manufacturing industries, and a large expansion of capital investment in them. The revival has occurred, to be sure, principally in the industries making consumers' goods, and the investment has taken the form mainly

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of enlarged inventories. But there is no sign that high wages—or anything else—have unduly retarded expansion in great sectors of factory production. The lag of investment has occurred mainly in what used to be our three largest channels for new capital—building construction, railroads and public utilities.

In each of these fields there are important obstacles besides labor costs. One of the most stubborn is the aftermath of boom speculation and financial chicanery, which created artificial capital structures requiring dehydration before the investors' confidence can be restored. Each, in addition, has peculiar difficulties of its own. Railroad expansion has come to an end because of new means of transportation; rail traffic suffers because of competition from trucks, buses, private automobiles and airplanes, plus a short-sighted policy of maintaining high rates. Building construction, which is linked with real estate and financial institutions, is an archaic and disorganized industry, shot through with monopolistic practices and inefficiency. Private utilities have signally failed in passing on to the consumers the full benefits of technical advance and in stimulating the economies of increased use, though they seem gradually to be learning that lesson, spurred on by the governmental competition that they furiously denounce.

In his discussion of wages, the author of The Economist's article makes an elementary theoretical error, to which conservative economists are prone. He speaks as if hourly wages were equivalent to labor costs. But there is another equally weighty factor, particularly important in this country—output per man-hour. As the productive efficiency of industry increases, labor costs may go down while hourly wages go up. That is just what has happened, for the most part, in American manufacturing, as Isador Lubin, Commissioner of Labor Statistics, has pointed out in a letter to The New York Times. Our industry has made enormous strides in efficiency. The big corporations are not suffering from high labor costs and are making entirely satisfactory profits whenever they have a sufficient volume of sales. But when buying stops, the sales curve falls and no conceivable reduction of wages would help them.

Now, for the high cost of capital goods. Wages in the construction industry have not risen much above the pre-depression level. On the other hand, there has been no great improvement in the efficiency of production in building. Building costs are indeed too high to stimulate investment, but their uneconomic level can be traced only in small measure, if at all, to increases in the hourly wages of building mechanics. What the industry needs is a thorough reorganization in the interest of less costly methods. One of its great handicaps, meanwhile, is insufficient reduction in the cost of materials. Some of these are manufactured by quasi-monopolies, like United States Steel. Here again, the level of wages is not the cause of high prices. The unit costs of manufacture are far more dependent on the percentage of capacity utilized. When the steel industry is reasonably busy, both its labor costs and its unit overhead drop precipitously, and ample profits are realized.

The general solution of the difficulty lies, not in reducing wages, but in reducing prices and increasing output. To achieve this end as completely as is desirable would require many reforms in organization and management, not only in individual enterprises but in whole industries and on a nationwide scale. Pending such reorganization, government spending will be necessary, and if government investment can be made in such a way as to bring it about, a change of incalculable benefit will have been made.

Democracy or Chautauquacy?

THE CONGRESS ON EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY held by Teachers' College, New York City, seems to have been a good deal of a fiasco. While the delegates were drawn from numerous groups and organizations, the dominant elements were apparently fairly liberal educators and decidedly conservative business men. They fought so bitterly in the sixteen seminars into which the congress was divided that it proved impossible for these groups to bring in agreed recommendations.

The business men objected to the principle of collective bargaining, to free speech in the classroom except within narrow limits, to permitting teachers to join "professional organizations" (*i.e.*, trade unions). Some of them wanted to destroy the National Youth Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps, by turning them over to the far from tender mercies of the individual states. Aside from these disputed points, the findings of the seminars were vague and trite. Like Coolidge's preacher who was against sin, the conferees were in favor of education for citizenship, straight thinking, developing leaders, building character.

The speakers at the general session were for the most part equally vague and platitudinous. Earl Baldwin, a curious choice for a congress such as this, warned that democracy often degenerates into license and produces tyranny. M. Herriot, detained in France by international problems, sent word that our crisis is moral rather than economic. At the closing session H. W. Prentis Jr., president of the Armstrong Cork Company and vice-president of the National Association of Manufacturers, bluntly told his hearers that we have too much democracy already, that this country was never intended to be democratic but a republic and proceeded to a barely veiled assault on the New Deal. The Chautauqua atmosphere that hung over the whole

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

affair got thickest at a moment when representatives of Boy Scouts, Boys' Clubs, Girl Scouts and Campfire Girls told their elders what democracy is and isn't.

Teachers' College now has an advisory Lay Council of prominent Wall Street men, headed by Winthrop W. Aldrich of the Chase National Bank. If this council is of any constructive value whatever to Teachers' College, the conference gave no evidence of it. On the contrary the whole affair had a slick, high-powered look to it, which suggested that perhaps there were big business men in the background grinding special axes of their own. This impression may have been partly because the publicity was directed by a slick and high-powered Wall Street money-raising and publicity firm. Certainly, it was as far as possible from the atmosphere of a group of scholars consulting together in an effort to advance the cause of truth.

Why was the conference held at all, in the broiling heat of a New York summer? Gossip on Morningside Heights suggests several possible answers, among them the advancement of certain individual fortunes, and the desire to offset an impression that Teachers' College is "radical." We do not know whether any such reports are reliable. We feel however that the whole Congress was beneath the dignity of a great institution like Columbia, and we hope the mistake won't be repeated.

Do Cheap Books Get Reviewed?

DO BOOK REVIEWERS TEND to ignore books that are published at low prices, many of them in paper bindings? In The New Republic of June 28 William Saroyan said that they do, and brought forward Modern Age Books as a case in point. The Saturday Review of Literature thereupon published an indignant editorial saying Saroyan's charges are not true and should never have appeared. The Saturday Review, which has been conspicuously good about reviewing paper-bound books, demanded fiercely that no reply be made that was not buttressed by cold statistics. It had had enough of casual opinions.

The sort of statistics that were asked for are not available; one would need to see the private records of numerous book publishers in order to establish a copper-riveted case. We have, however, received some interesting data from Louis F. Birk, editor of Modern Age Books. He agrees that reviewers outside New York City have treated Modern Age books fairly. But New York itself, and particularly the Sunday editions of The Times and Herald Tribune, play an important role in the launching of any book. Mr. Birk points out that The Herald Tribune has ruled that a paper-bound book is a pamphlet, to be treated as such (Modern Age Books average more than 75,000 words, or twice as long as such a best seller as John Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men"). The Times has made no such rule, but its conduct in general has paralleled that of The Herald Tribune. Instances of neglect follow:

Margaret Fishback's "Safe Conduct." Reviewed in no daily except The Post when it appeared in paper binding. Three months later, cloth binding, reviewed by every New York paper.

Maury Maverick's "In Blood and Ink." Reviewed by over one hundred papers through the country but had not been mentioned up to August 1 by any of five New York newspapers, including The Times and Herald Tribune. The Post was an exception.

"All the Brave," the joint work of Luis Quintanilla, Ernest Hemingway, Elliot Paul and Jay Allen. Ignored by every New York newspaper except The New York Times.

"Air War," by W. O'D. Pierce. Although this book made a deep impression in England and was praised by American military experts, the Modern Age edition was ignored by every New York paper up to August 1, six weeks after publication.

One can always argue, of course, that any given book didn't deserve a review, or that the critics were swamped with work, or that there is some other reason for the failure to discuss any particular volume. Some other publishers of low-priced books (not in paper covers, however) report that the reviewers have treated them well. Mr. Birk himself does not charge any such thing as "a conspiracy of silence." He sees only a tendency among the papers and reviewers. If this tendency exists—and we think it does—it is a pity. Low-priced books are a boon to the reader. They should mean extending the market, getting authors published who would otherwise have no chance, basing the literacy of our country on something firmer than popular magazines. It would be regrettable if enterprises with such aims were hindered by prejudices of book reviewers or book-review editors which have no sound basis in fact.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

Editors

BRUCE BLIVEN MALCOLM COWLEY R. M. LOVETT
GEORGE SOULE STARK YOUNG

Assistant Editors OTIS FERGUSON ELIZABETH HULING

Contributing Editors

JAMES BENÉT BRUCE BLIVEN JR. H. N. BRAILSFORD
HEYWOOD BROUN JOHN T. FLYNN WALDO FRANK
E. C. LINDEMAN JON. MITCHELL LEWIS MUMFORD
REXFORD G. TUGWELL

Treasurer: DANIEL MEBANE

E. G. WOOD, *Advertising Manager* BYRON DEXTER, *Circulation Manager*

SINGLE COPIES, FIFTEEN CENTS; YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION, FIVE DOLLARS; CANADIAN, FIVE DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS; FOREIGN, SIX DOLLARS; THREE MONTHS' TRIAL, ONE DOLLAR

EDITED AND PRODUCED UNDER UNION CONDITIONS BY CONTRACT WITH THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE GUILD, LOCAL 18, UOPWA, CIO.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lenin's "The State and Revolution"

Twelfth of the "Books That Changed Our Minds"

THERE IS PROBABLY NOTHING in the history of political thought that equals in dramatic power Lenin's achievement in linking in his own life the analysis and enactment of revolution. He was one of those rare persons in whom life drives no paralyzing wedges and in whom therefore there is no gap between the idea and the act. Our psychologists call this the "integrated personality" and our educators pant for it; and in the next breath they would both dismiss whomever they found possessing it as a "fanatic." This single-mindedness of purpose is an essential condition of revolutionary success; and the interplay between action and analysis has been generalized by the Marxian tradition as "the unbroken web of theory and practice." But it was Lenin's summit achievement, topping that of every other revolutionary leader we have known, to make out of his life the enduring symbol not only of tenacity of striving but of the clear unity of thought and deed. Nor are we dealing here with a reckless extremism. The extremisms belong rather with the world's Hamlets and Genghis Khans, with the paralyzed intellectual as a symbol at one pole and the extroverted world conqueror at the other. Lenin's greatness lies exactly in his resolution of these polar extremes.

Yet it is not a resolution aiming merely to untie the knots in one individual's life. If Lenin sought to resolve the tensions and dilemmas in his own life, it was in order to make of himself a sharper instrument in the social struggle. The goal was always effective action; in the interlocking of thought and deed, the end-product was the deed and not the thought. One may detect in him a mild anti-intellectualism which never fails to thrust the idea back in its place whenever it seeks to become an end. In the postscript to "The State and Revolution" he explains why the book is truncated and why the final chapter was never written as planned. It was to have been on "The Experience of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917." What interfered was the second (October) Russian Revolution. "Such interference," writes Lenin with a gentle irony, "can only be welcomed. . . . It is more pleasant and useful to go through the 'experience of revolution' than to write about it." More pleasant and useful: a whole way of life is summed up in that phrase; and in it the entire tradition of the litterateurs who have dallied with the revolutionary dream stands rebuked.

How "The State and Revolution" came to be written contains no inconsiderable part of its meaning. Lenin and his wife Krupskaya were living in 1917 in Switzerland as one of a little band of revolutionary exiles from all countries. For a decade they had wandered over the face of Europe, from Stockholm to Geneva to Paris to Cracow and back to Geneva. It was a decade of shattering loneliness. The strength of the Russian workers and peasants seemed utterly broken after the 1905 revolution and the terror that followed it. Factional struggles splintered into tiny fragments whatever strength remained. One had to face espionage and repression from without, and treachery and inconstant purpose from within; one lived on the edge of starvation, a jangled life of frayed nerves and obscure strivings, most tragic because it was severed from the proletarian Russian soil. When the War broke out in 1914 the Social Democrats in every country voted war credits, and workers confronted workers across the trenches. Lenin's answer was given at the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences, where he rallied the remaining anti-war Socialist leaders; it was given in his book "Imperialism" (1915), a pitiless analysis of the internal capitalist breakdown from which the external capitalist rivalries sprang.

But there was a deeper answer still. The betrayal of the Marxist tradition by its accredited spokesmen (even Plekhanov, whom Lenin had always admired, turned patriotic: no wound could have gone deeper) shook Lenin to the roots of his being. An individualist thinker might have turned to an autobiography, a religious thinker to solitude. Lenin turned to first principles. Since he had organized his life not around a single event but around a conception of history, it was to a reëxamination of the movement of history that he had to return in these years of crisis.

The writing of "Imperialism" had enabled him to see the implications of the World War for the revolutionary path that was to follow it. But "Imperialism" was a work of economic analysis. The real questions Lenin was now concerned with—revolutionary tactics, the seizure of power, political construction and reconstruction, state forms and their succession—were political questions. Now there was strictly speaking no body of political theory in the Marxian tradition—in the sense, for example, that "Das Kapital" embodied an economic theory and "The Communist Manifesto" a theory of history and the class struggle. There was only Engels' "The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State," full of brilliant leads lost in a quagmire of the anthropology of the day; and there were hints in the historical and polemical writings of Marx himself. Lenin was to bring these suggestions together, melt them in the passionate urgency of his own mind,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pour the metal into a framework of doctrine, hammer it into a reasoned logic of revolution.

The first stage was a set of notebooks that Lenin called "Marxism and the State." He had evidently begun these in a random way not long after 1907; and he had pursued them in the libraries of various European cities. After the outbreak of the War his pace increased. Cut off from action, he sat day after day in the libraries at Zürich and Berne, sharpening the outlines of a revolutionary theory of the state. When he got news of the March revolution in Russia his reaction was immediate. The "old European pattern" of revolutions, where mass revolt had always ended with some "constitutional" middle-class regime, had for once to be broken. There came the frantic efforts to get to Russia, wild schemes of landing in an airplane, ingenious schemes for getting through on a Swedish passport and, since he did not know the language, pretending to be a deaf mute. Finally came Martov's plan of going through Germany in exchange for interned German prisoners—a plan which was finally followed and which led to the famous "sealed train" episode and the charges of being in the pay of the German government. Ralph Fox, in his vivid biography of Lenin, has described Lenin's arrival at the Finland Station, the enthusiastic ovation of the sailors and workers, his quick perception that they were now more revolutionary in temper even than the Bolsheviks themselves reckoned.

There followed months of agitating, organizing, pamphleteering. After the July Days a period of extreme repression set in; Lenin had to go into hiding. Just before he left Petrograd he wrote Kamenev:

> *Entre nous.* If they get me I ask you to publish my little notebook "Marxism and the State" (stranded in Stockholm). Bound in a blue cover. All the quotations are collected from Marx and Engels, likewise from Kautsky against Pannekoek. There is a whole series of notes and comments. Formulate it. I think you could publish it with a week's work. I think it important, for it is not only Plekhanov and Kautsky who got off the track. My conditions: all this is to be absolutely *entre nous.*

The notebook was somehow procured. Lenin worked over it during August and September while hiding first in a hayloft and then in a twig hut on a worker's farm and finally at Helsingfors.

It is clear from Lenin's letter that he set enormous store by his book. If he were killed, it would be his legacy to the revolutionary movement. "It is not only Plekhanov and Kautsky who got off the track"—in that restrained line Lenin packed the whole bitter experience of his discussions in the Central Committee of the past months. And so, between sending memoranda to his comrades on the Committee, Lenin wrote "The State and Revolution." Before he could get at its final chapter, he was once more swept up in the October Revolution itself. The press had such a mass of more urgent work that the book was not published until the next year. By that time Lenin was at the head of the new Soviet government. And the book which had been begun and written as a guidebook for the revolutionary movement now took on fresh meaning as the blueprint of political construction in the Soviet state.

To the superficial eye "The State and Revolution" seems only a hundred-page pamphlet, stripped of adornment, filled with the clichés of the Marxist terminology. Its method is the glossator method so common in the literature—the appeal to the basic texts of the Marxian fathers, the elucidation of the texts and the use of them to refute one's opponents. It is sometimes heavy-footed and unfailingly rasping in its polemics. Where then lies its greatness?

Only the dullard will fail to see through the outward skin the ribbed intellectual strength of the book. Lenin's greatest pamphlets have with his speeches the same quality of strict economy, the same intellectual flame burning the more strongly because nothing else is permitted to obscure it. Neither did he make any pretense to originality, and he follows the method of gathering and commenting on the *loci classici* of Marx and Engels all the more severely because he wishes to play down his own role. He felt that his job was not to create but to restore the Marxian theory of the state. His attacks on Kautsky and Plekhanov were directed against the whole Social-Democratic literature of the Germans, which had "transplanted . . . with an accelerated tempo the immense experience of a neighboring, more advanced country to the almost virgin soil of our proletarian movement." He felt he had to destroy the influence of these writings. Hence the savage polemical method. It is as if Lenin were seeking to light up the doctrinal darkness with the dazzling flash of knives.

Actually, however, Lenin's book is amply creative in its elements of synthesis and reinterpretation. The bricks for a Marxian theory of the state were available to anyone, but no one had ever put them together. And in the process he had to view old political forms in the light of new economic realities, with the genius for this that Lenin above anyone possessed.

Lenin starts with a masterly restatement of the class-domination or class-instrument theory of the state. The state is simply the special apparatus of force used by the dominant class to keep the underlying classes in subjection. By its very nature it arises out of the irreconcilability of class conflicts. This is true of capitalist democracy as it is of every other state, except that subtler means to maintain class power are used instead of force: "A democratic republic is the best possible political shell for capitalism." The whole form of the state is determined by the class uses to which it is put. As class succeeds class, the state machinery does not

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

adjust itself to the demands of the new class power. The whole state apparatus—police, armies, bureaucracy, judiciary—must be violently shattered by the class rising to power. The bourgeois classes, when they came to power, created a state apparatus, basically parliamentary and bureaucratic, for their own purposes. The proletariat will have to do the same, changing state machinery in turn in accordance with *their* objectives.

Thus far Lenin's exposition has run along the traditional Marxian lines, but his emphases are interesting. One emphasis—or rather, lack of it—is the striking neglect of the theory of the class struggle proper. Lenin states it, demonstrates it and gets over with it. It is simply "not true" that "the main point in the teaching of Marx is the class struggle." It "was *not* created by Marx, but by the bourgeois *before* Marx, and is, generally speaking, *acceptable* to the bourgeoisie" (how much light this throws on Charles Beard's insistence, for example, that he got his class theory not from Marx but from Madison). "A Marxist is one who *extends* the acceptance of the class struggle to the acceptance of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*." Which leads, accordingly, to another of Lenin's emphases: on the inevitability of the capture and destruction of the bourgeois state power by the proletariat. Engel's theory of "the withering away of the state," he insists, has been distorted. It is not the bourgeois state that withers away, but eventually the proletarian dictatorship. The bourgeois state power must be captured and dissolved.

When he comes to the question of what is to replace it, Lenin reaches the heart of his argument. The experience of the Paris Commune of 1871 becomes central. The commune as a political form replaced parliamentary bureaucracy. It remained a representative institution, but ceased to be a parliamentary "talking-shop." It became "a working-body, executive and legislative at the same time." It leveled the distance between the working class and its ruling committees; it reduced the pay of all state officials to workers' pay. And while destroying the parasitic network of centralized French bureaucracy, the Communards aimed at building up and extending the genuine national unity through a new centralism—a commune of communes. Lenin would, of course, have developed this theme further in his discussion of the soviets as the political units of the Russian Revolution, had he ever written his last chapter. But he wrote enough to make it clear that the new proletarian state forms already existed in revolutionary history, and that they did not have to be spun out of the minds of theorists.

These living historical forms Lenin calls the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the whole book must be seen at once as an argument for its inevitability and a pæan to its nature. It has, according to Lenin, two principal features. On the one hand it is a *dictatorship*, in which the proletariat shares power with no other class, and in which the hypocrisies of the sharing of power are stripped away. On the other hand it is an *expansion of democracy*: "democracy for the people and not democracy for the rich folk." What seems to us a paradox —the combination of dictatorship with democracy—is to Lenin no paradox at all. Democracy for the vast majority, he argues, is possible only when accompanied by suppression of the exploiting minority through force. When the latter task has been achieved, the state machinery itself becomes useless, and increasingly withers away. The first phase of communist society—socialist production—gives way to the "higher" phase of a completely classless and therefore a completely stateless society. Socialism will make possible a huge technological development, which will in turn give labor a new dignity and change the whole character of consumption habits. But how long a time will be necessary for this transition, Lenin insists, or what forms it will assume, it is impossible to say in advance.

It would take a volume at least as long as Lenin's to discuss with any thoroughness the meaning and validity of his argument. Actually an entire literature has already developed around the book. Lenin has been used by every group in the struggles of the Marxists since his death. What is more pressing is for those outside the factions to examine what his thought means for the socialist tradition in the crisis democracies.

It is almost a quarter-century since Lenin's book was written. That quarter-century has witnessed the enactment of part of his vision and the dissolution of another part. The dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union has proved its strength and its capacity to fashion its own economic and political forms. But the world proletarian revolution has not been realized, and in its place fascism has become the aggressive force. In this context the bourgeois democratic states present a facet which Lenin recognized but did not emphasize—that of temporary barricades against the threat of universal barbarism. The crisis of the socialist tradition revolves today around two basic and interrelated questions. First, how can fascism best be fought and a democratic socialism achieved? Second, what attitude does this imply for left-wing democratic groups toward such crisis democracies as the New Deal?

There is one line of political reasoning current today that runs directly counter to Lenin's whole position: the contention that the state is not the political instrument of any class, but a sort of broker or mediator between classes. The vivid illustration advanced in behalf of this view is the New Deal itself, which can scarcely be spoken of as an instrument of the capitalists without arousing more ironic laughter than any theory can bear. But Lenin has anticipated it by a quotation from Engels: "By way of exception . . . there are periods when the warring classes so nearly attain equilibrium that the state power, ostensibly appearing as a media-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tor, assumes for the moment a certain independence in relation to both." And one may add from the experience of today's crisis democracies that such a state arises only in periods of dire capitalist emergency, that it always minimizes the necessary concessions to the working class, that its hands are tied by reactionary elements within its own ranks, and that when threatened by genuine proletarian militancy it never fails to make common cause with the capitalists who hate it. I have found nowhere in the literature of political theory insights as acute as Lenin's into the ways by which democratic political forms are used to mask the fact of actual economic inequality. Maury Maverick, for example, is miles away from being a Marxian, as also is Thurman Arnold. Yet "In Blood and Ink," like "The Folklore of Capitalism," spells out in terms of the American experience the ways in which the forms and the rhetoric of our culture conceal the actual logic of oligarchy within it.

But if the class-domination theory remains valid as against the mediation theory, what shall we say of Lenin's insistence that the machinery of the capitalist democratic state must inevitably be captured and shattered, and that there is no path of continuity without violence between it and a democratic socialism? I do not propose to enter here into the interminable discussion whether the new Comintern line has betrayed Lenin's reasoning or is merely fulfilling it under conditions he did not foresee. What interests me much more is that Lenin's own book contains two divergent lines of direction, from each of which the clashing schools of Marxian thought today derive their strength.

One of these strains is the inevitability of a violent revolution. The other is the uniqueness of each national experience, and of the economic development, the political forms and the revolutionary temper of each. The first leads to an austere anti-reformism and a bitter rejection of the Fabian assumptions. The second leads to an emphasis on the "national question," on national traditions and temper and, in Engels' words, on the theme that "the working class can only come to power under the form of the democratic republic." Can these strains be reconciled? If ever a generation will have the impulsion to reconcile them, it is one like ours, conscious through fascism of the tenacity with which the ruling class can cling to power, but conscious also of the reckless costs of violence as a method. What is healthy in Lenin's tough-mindedness is the insistence that Fabianism is never in itself a solution, since the ruling class will never in the end surrender power without a desperate attempt to smash democracy itself. But we may argue, nevertheless, that Fabianism and violence do not exhaust the alternatives: that, by Lenin's own reasoning, the fulfillment of the promise of a democratic republic leads in the deepest sense to a democratic socialism; and that revolutions of the majority, like the Jeffersonian, Jacksonian and the New Deal revolutions, must in the end, if conducted with courage and skill, make an anti-democratic capitalist coup merely suicidal adventurism.

Less immediate but no less important are the implications of Lenin's analysis of the nature and pace of socialist development itself. Our American generation will not accept his thesis that in a socialist state the workers' government will share power with no other class. What this has come to mean historically is the one-party system and the suppression of all opposition groups. But does this necessarily follow even from a class-domination theory of the state? There can be no doubt that in a minority-dominated capitalist state, the capitalists find it possible to share their power with the other classes. Why should this not be even more possible in an eventual majority-dominated workers' state?

This is not to deny Lenin's thesis that each new social system must fashion its own political instruments in terms of its own social purposes. But it is to deny that this means a clean sweep of the political machinery of the past. In fact, the essence of the Marxian theory of history is that the most valid elements of one stage survive in the next. Lenin himself insists, in his chapter on the Paris Commune, on the distinction between its discarding of parliamentary forms and its retention of representative forms. In the same way, the basic elements of the democratic tradition—the competition of ideas and of political opinions, and the democratic control of bureaucratic action—must not only be retained but expanded in a socialized culture.

In his analysis of the administrative machinery under socialism, Lenin mixes a good deal of hard sense with some curious utopianisms. He saw the need for administrative centralism if the economic machine were to run. He anticipated the *expertise* of the Soviet state when he remarked, in answer to Kautsky's "superstitious reverence" for the "ministers" of the Prussian state: "Why can they not be replaced, say, by commissions of specialists working under sovereign all-powerful Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies?" He relied, for democratic checks on the bureaucracy, on the recall of officials, the leveling down of their pay to that of the workers, and the imposition of executive responsibility on them which would force them to test their plans in practice. What seems utopian is his belief that eventually all distinctions between the officials and the population as a whole would disappear. "Under socialism, *all* will take a turn in management, and will soon become accustomed to the idea of no managers at all." Certainly that has not happened in the Soviet state after two decades, nor is it likely to happen anywhere. We are more and more coming to recognize that the modern state, whether socialist or capitalist, cannot do without a bureaucracy but must learn to control it. In the beginning of socialized planning the state technicians are bound to have a power that strains the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

limits of democratic safety. But in the end the problem of democratic controls must be confronted squarely.

I prefer to omit, as beyond my interest or powers, all discussion of Lenin's theory of the transition from socialism to the "higher stage" of a classless, stateless society. Some day this may have some relevance for us. Today it remains in the realm of the luxuries of speculation. What is not in that realm is the democratic temper which pervades Lenin's whole life, and in the light of which his militant plea for dictatorship must be judged. There is no one in the history of political thought who guided himself more surely by contact with the masses, and by an amazing genius for discovering what the ordinary man thought and felt.

This book by the stocky, bald little revolutionist, with its bristling militancy and its crabbed style; does it seem strange that it should have shaken our world? It has become a truism to say that the success of the Russian Revolution was unthinkable without the genius of Lenin's leadership. By the same token it was unthinkable without the confident analysis that enabled him to bludgeon the Central Committee into heeding his plans for a seizure of state power. But the converse is also true: the successful establishment of the Soviet state gave the book an authenticity and a prestige that has made it one of the great twentieth-century classics.

No book that has been discussed thus far in this series has been as widely read as Lenin's. In America it sells in editions of a hundred thousand, in the Soviet Union in editions of millions. Tens of millions have read it all over the world, and their minds have beaten to the rhythm of its logic. Lenin has become the supreme symbol of the revolutionary tradition, and through that symbolism even his mannerisms and his excesses have been ratified. After Lenin the dwarfling revolutionists without his talent nevertheless aped his withering phrases and, without his saving flexibility, they pursued his rigor.

Yet this is of trifling moment when weighed in the balance of Lenin's legacy as a whole. He wrote his book on the eve of a successful revolution; we read it today on the threshold of what may be a black period of reaction. Yet if we recall that Lenin began his researches for it in a similar period, during the years of exile after the 1905 failure, it should do much to dispel our sense of defeatism. For the long view that Lenin took is as valid in our day as in his. If we reject some of his formulations, it is because we have learned something from that history from which he himself was always learning and which he helped to shape. To the Marxist tradition he has given its most effective figure, and in the movement of western political theory he is in his realism one of the two or three towering figures since Machiavelli.

MAX LERNER

Father Coughlin's Platoons

WHEN THE NEW YORK TIMES of August 14 reported that a police captain and sergeant had been beaten up at a Bronx street meeting of the Christian Mobilizers, and that it had been necessary to call out two riot squads and arrest five men before order could be restored, some New Yorkers became aware, for the first time, of a situation that began when Father Coughlin's Christian Front was organized last summer. Since then Jews have been attacked by bands of Coughlinite hoodlums and Jewish shops have been placarded with obscene anti-Semitic stickers. A Christian Front picket-line has plodded up and down the sidewalk in front of Station WMCA because the priest was put off the air last November for refusing to submit his scripts in advance; salesmen for Social Justice have infested Times Square like a plague of locusts, insulting passers-by, and picking fights; and tolerance meetings of groups opposed to anti-Semitism have been violently broken up. Meanwhile New York's newspapers, although receiving detailed, confidential reports of these and more covert activities, have deliberately played them down.

If the world does not know that Father Coughlin has a storm-troop organization on the streets, that is not his fault. As far back as the spring of 1938 he was urging his followers to organize into platoons. In Social Justice for May 23, 1938, he wrote, "Let your organization be composed of no more than twenty-five members. After a few contacts with these twenty-five persons you will observe that two of them may be capable of organizing twenty-five more. Invite these capable persons to do that very thing." In a "Message to Platoons" (Social Justice, June 13, 1938) he said, "You and your group are affiliated directly to me." For the past six months he has been calling for a Christian Front against communism, and in a radio address on July 30, 1939, he denounced "the poppycock of democracy" and declared that his Christian Front was ready to attack the problem "in the Franco manner" if necessary.

The Christian Front was formally organized in August, 1938, at a meeting held in a Catholic church building in midtown Manhattan. Closely identified at first with a pro-Franco Catholic order, it was both a membership organization and a coördinating agency for groups like the Social Justice Distributors' Clubs, the Crusaders for Americanism, the German-American Bund, the German-American Business League, the American Nationalists, the Citizens' Protective League, the American Patriots and the Christian Mobilizers. Its announced purpose was "To enlist all Christian citi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

zens united on purposes that are truly American in that necessary crusade against the anti-Christian forces of Red Revolution"; its official slogan, "A Christian America Through Christian Americans."

All Christian Front meetings—and between eighty and a hundred are held each week in New York City alone—follow the same general pattern. There is the repeated identification of Judaism with communism. There is the deprecation of the democracies and the rearguard defense of policies of the Axis powers. There is an extraordinary mixture of blasphemy and reverence, thumping profanity and hushed references to the Founder of Christianity. There is the almost sadistic delight of underprivileged people in finding a scapegoat, and gratitude toward the messiah who points the way to a "Jew-free America." From the vocabulary of the German-American Bund, Christian Front speakers have lifted phrases which they repeat with suitable inflections to the accompaniment of boos and hisses: "President Rosenfeld," "Rosie," "The pink lady in Washington" (Mrs. Roosevelt), "Butch" (Mayor LaGuardia), "The Tribesmen," "The Mockies."

The largest and most belligerent group in the Front is the Christian Mobilizers, which was organized at Triboro Palace, the Bronx (its national headquarters), last July 6. At this first meeting strong-arm squads were assigned to canvass the South Bronx and enlist all "Christian" business men in the organization. Only men over eighteen years old may join, and only after they have filled out an elaborate application blank covering everything from color of hair and eyes to military record. The application must be accompanied by two photographs. Members of the Mobilizers pledge themselves to "Buy Christian until such time as the Christian people attain a fair share of the economic power of this nation."

Head of the Mobilizers and a potential führer of the whole Christian Front movement is Joseph McWilliams, a handsome young rabble-rouser. Although the Front has a president and vice-president, McWilliams is actually the dominant figure. Because of his outspoken admiration for Hitler he is especially beloved by the German-American Bund (one of the first organizations to affiliate with the Christian Front). Recently he and his bodyguard (twenty ex-members of the Irish Republican Army, according to him) received an ovation when they arrived at a meeting of the Bund at Eblings Casino in the Bronx where Wilhelm Kunze was speaking. McWilliams replied with a speech in which he said that the Mobilizers were "100-percent behind the Bund" and that he knew the Bund was "100-percent behind the Mobilizers." On another occasion he solemnly told his audience that "America can never be without a leader as long as there is a copy of 'Mein Kampf.'"

Recent plans of the Christian Front groups call for a radio station in Jersey City. A Radio Expansion Company has been formed, with headquarters at 1 Montgomery Street, Jersey City, and 50,000 shares of stock in the Commonwealth Broadcasting Company, at $1.33 per share, have been advertised in an imposing prospectus. This stock is advertised as paying a seven-percent dividend semi-monthly, with all preferred stockholders participating in five percent of the corporate profits. However, a stockholder must be a member of The Brotherhood of Christians Congress, whose motto is "They have rights who dare maintain them"—a slogan frequently seen on the WMCA picket line.

This is the most ambitious project the Coughlinite groups have yet attempted, and with good reason. Nothing has galled the oracle of Royal Oak more than the knowledge that he is *persona non grata* to the big chains. He does not have a single first-class outlet in the New York metropolitan area and his followers must sit with their ears glued to loud-speakers if they are to sift the good wheat from the Sunday afternoon chaff of the big stations. This has probably cost him hundreds of thousands of listeners around New York. But even a medium-powered radio station in Jersey City can blanket New York City and reach down into Philadelphia and eastern Pennsylvania. There are two major hurdles to be overcome, however, before the CBC can become a reality—the Federal Communications Commission and the Securities and Exchange Commission. Neither of these is mentioned in the prospectus.

Because the great majority of Front members are Irish Catholics, and because The Tablet, official organ of the Diocese of Brooklyn, is sold at Christian Front meetings along with Social Justice, many people conclude that the Catholic Church is officially friendly to the organization. No authoritative Catholic voice has yet been raised in opposition to it, and many individual priests, while not condoning all it does, favor it as an antidote to communism. A strong lay sentiment against it, however, is developing among some Catholics and St. Patrick's Council of the Knights of Columbus in the South Bronx recently voted to expel any member found belonging to the Front.

The Catholic nature of the Christian Front is so evident that thus far it has been unable to attract many Protestants, although there are undoubtedly Protestant bigots in the affiliated organizations. Any number of anti-New Deal, anti-Semitic Protestants in the United States would certainly look with favor on a native brand of fascism, but they just as certainly would not tolerate the kind of Encyclical-based clerical fascism that Father Coughlin is plugging. American nationalism as exemplified in the Know Nothing movement, the Ku Klux Klan, and the old American Protestant Association is historically anti-Catholic. Both Father Coughlin and his Christian Front would receive short shrift from the Southern and Midwestern nationalists who would take over Washington with the advent of American totalitarianism.

ALSON J. SMITH

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Who Am I?

THIS IS NO PARLOR-GAME question out of Dorothy di Grasso by Elsa Maxwell. Nor is it merely rhetorical. It is a genuine and anxious inquiry, stirred into fresh life each day.

The same question, I have become convinced, similarly troubles many other Americans in a condition of life comparable to mine. Precisely what are we and where do we stand, those of us who are Gentiles, born in this country, now in early middle-age, brought up in proper Protestant homes before the War, who started reading and thinking seriously when H. L. Mencken was regarded as a Force and Sinclair Lewis as a great realistic novelist, who found our working feet before the depression and have earned or wangled a living out of capitalism, and who are not yet too old and whose children will soon be old enough to fight in another war, civil or foreign?

We're not Communists and we're certainly not Fascists. Perhaps we're that most despised of all creatures —liberals. In any case, we're not without certain rational capacity and decent human impulses. We decline to abandon what mental processes God or evolution has granted us and to ignore what experience, observation and reading have taught us. We try to understand and judge men and events with some intelligence, instead of swallowing slogans like Dr. Carter's little liver pills. But where does that leave us?

As exhibit A, or Horrible Example Number One, I offer herewith the credo of one American, model 1939 (subject to change without notice):

I believe that:

1. Men are not created equal, in talents or opportunities, in the sight of God or man, but—

that one reason why this country is still habitable for decent people is that Americans, in the words of the Declaration of Independence, "hold these truths to be self-evident."

2. Men in the mass, regardless of birth or previous condition of servitude, are ignorant, cowardly, gullible and addicted to hysteria, but—

that jury decisions approximate justice more closely than do those of individual judges, and the democratic process results in greater benefits to mankind than does any form of autocracy, monarchy or dictatorship.

3. The rise of Hitler, from its beginning, is clearly traceable to the swinish policy of the French and the British at Versailles, but—

that the defeat of Hitler's Germany by France and Great Britain is essential to an ordered, civilized world, although they'll probably act like swine again at the next peace conference, and thereby sow the seeds of still another war.

4. The moth-eaten British lion, mincing to Munich under an umbrella, deliberately and cynically sold out Central Europe to Hitler in the belief that thereby the ruling class of England was being saved from war-bred revolution, but—

that in the hopeless state of England's unpreparedness at that time, no sane man, even one with a proper sense of responsibility to the lower classes—upon whom the brunt of the fighting must have fallen—would have had the moral right to risk war.

5. Stalinist communism differs little in its methods from fascism, however much the two differ in ostensible aims and ultimate results, but—

that in the fight against fascism, which is one of the few things worth going to war against, the party-line Communists are the most effective and reliable fighters.

6. The capitalist system is destroying itself through mass production, but—

that it will probably take years to die and in the interim it behooves one to continue to earn a living in accordance with its absurd standards and to raise one's children to do likewise.

7. If the workers of the world would arise they'd have nothing to lose but their chains, but—

comes the revolution, they'll merely create a new privileged class of professional politicians to enchain them.

8. A Popular Front in this or any other country alone can prevent fascism from coming to power, but—

that the conflicting elements which go to make up a Popular Front never can become fused except as a result of fascist successes sufficient to insure the ultimate victory of fascism.

9. War is the lowest form of human activity, but—

that it's preferable to the Chamberlain conception of peace.

10. The greatest hero of any war is the convinced pacifist, who suffers the scorn, hatred and oppression of his fellow countrymen, but—

that in modern power politics to turn the other cheek is simply suicide, and that any nation nowadays, in order to survive, must treat its pacifists as traitors.

11. That religion is essential to human happiness be-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cause of man's reluctance to face the final extinction of his ego in death, and the Roman Catholic Church is religion's most useful instrument, but—

that by temporizing with the Nazis and actively supporting Franco and his bombing of helpless civilians, the Catholic hierarchy has divorced the church from the respect and service of mankind.

12. No decent American should buy the products of Franco's Spain, Germany, Italy, Hearst or Henry Ford, but—

that anyone who consistently boycotted all the countries and concerns whose methods I regard as barbaric, would be reduced to the existence of a cave-man.

13. Fascism and its degenerate hand-maiden, anti-Semitism, are spreading rapidly in this country and both should be fought, but—

the rich Jews in the United States, like those in Germany and Austria, will facilitate their spread instead of fighting it.

14. Free speech is one of our most precious possessions (or illusions, if you will), but—

that to grant free speech to the German-American Bund, or to any other political organization believing in the suppression of free speech, is criminal stupidity.

15. Roosevelt is primarily a politician and an opportunist who is trying to save capitalism in this country in spite of the capitalists, but—

that, as President of the United States, he has done more for the benefit of the people as a whole than any other public figure in my lifetime.

16. That any adult who doesn't do anything in his power to oppose fascism, Tom Girdler, the American Legion, Café Society, autograph hunters, movies as bad as Gunga Din, jitterbugs, skiers on the subway, Colonel Lindbergh and Iron Cross First Class, is a rascal or a dolt, but—

that anyone who thinks that his opposition will be any more effective than the efforts to induce Roosevelt to lift the Spanish Embargo should be clapped into a bughouse.

Again, who am I? Dr. Livingston, I presume.

OLIVER H. P. GARRETT

Huey's Louisiana Heritage

SOME FOUR YEARS AGO, when I reported on the death of Huey Long for The New Republic, it seemed proper to comment as follows: "Huey leaves behind him an enormous confusion and a machine which, while only 30-percent as effective as when he was alive, still remains one of the most potent political organizations the United States has ever seen. . . . This machine, utilizing what might be called Huey's posthumous energy, will probably continue to control Louisiana for the next several years. . . . The state is now being milked by a gang of corrupt and venal politicians for all they can possibly get. . . . Graft is the accepted order of the day. . . . The dictator has gone but the dictatorship remains."

These lines are not exhumed, as so often happens in the pages of this venerable journal, to give testimony to the crystal-gazing ability of their author. They were written as simple statements of obvious fact, containing nothing that was not known to every citizen of Louisiana. It took four years, however, plus a miserable affair of WPA graft exposed by The New Orleans States, to put a local open secret on the front pages of the nation's newspapers. There is the stench of scandal at the sign of the Kingfish. Headlines scream, newsboys shout, editorials fulminate. The noise and indignation are several years too late, and the cynical may shake their heads, but better late than never.

It is not possible to understand the present state of affairs in Louisiana without understanding Huey Long. Huey, it must be remembered, was more than a political accident. He was a direct result of the Civil War: the ultimate perfection of the type of Southern politician brought into being by old Ben Tillman of South Carolina: the authentic voice of the lower and middle middle-class freed by the War from the economic and social repressions of the plantation caste system. There is always a danger of simplification when one tries to condense material sufficient for a chapter into a paragraph. It may be said, however, that Huey Long came to power in Louisiana because of a significant shift in the Southern economy and because the masses had grown to distrust the aristocratic plantation and business leadership that had previously controlled the state—generally, though there was much sound of warfare, in conjunction with the old New Orleans ring.

One must also remember that, generally speaking, Huey did not construct his dictatorship by extra-legal means. He was as much of a stickler for "legality" as the early Adolf Hitler. As they say in the hill country, "He got voted the power." But once voted the power, once in possession of his famous rubber-stamp legislature, he took every measure necessary to make the state his own principality. And it was to remain his principality, from the red clay of Winn Parish to the black

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

muck of the bayou country, until the night he was assassinated.

Then the boys took over.

A more ideal situation, from the viewpoint of the wolving politicians who followed Huey, could hardly be imagined. The checks and balances of the democratic process, for all practical purposes, had completely disappeared; so much so that the present Mayor of New Orleans and the strong man of Louisiana politics, Robert Sidney Maestri, was simply *certified* as mayor by the Secretary of State and given a term of six years, instead of four, by a special act of a special session of the legislature. Huey's henchmen, ever ready to obey orders and ask no questions, filled every important state office. The last remnants of the opposition were scattered and routed. All the state's election-fraud laws had been amended by Huey's rubber-stamp legislature. A whole state, in short, was ripe for the plucking.

The details of the plucking need not concern us here. They have been fully reported in the daily press and are significant only in that they illustrate the debauchery of a whole commonwealth: a moral let-down that extended to every section of society. It would be easy enough to use a cartoonist's convenience and symbolize the state of Louisiana as a woman outraged by a gang of rapacious plunderers. That, however, would omit an essential element from the picture—a disinterested and even bored citizenry who did not care whether the plunderers raped or not. There is consequently something almost *opera bouffe* about the Citizens' Committee now demanding a "complete" investigation into the affairs of the state. Where have these indignant worthies been for the past four years? Is it news to them that Dr. James M. Smith, the president of Louisiana State University, was over his head in wheat? If so, they are at least six months late in picking up the gossip of every brokerage house in New Orleans. Do they find it astonishing that ex-Governor Richard Leche, who went into office a poor man, is now rated a millionaire? Street-car conductors knew that two years ago. Are they astonished at the flagrant conduct of Seymour Weiss and certain of his associates? Are they bowled over by the five-percent "deduct" taken by the machine from the salaries of state, parish and city employees? Again, if so, truck-drivers are more accurately informed. Or is the whole secret contained in the fact that there need be no fear of reprisals, as in the days of Huey, now that the politicos are on the run?

In any case, this is no time for pious pretensions and the striking of heroic poses. The stenchsome mess we have before us is not going to be cleaned up by resolutions, or sermons, or better-than-thou committees. The time when such brooms might have been helpful is long since past. The chief agency that can bring the guilty in Louisiana to book, and clear the innocent of suspicion, is the national administration operating through the federal Department of Justice. A great many people have been skeptical as to whether any such investigation would be undertaken, and with good reason. The whole country believes that after Huey's death the Second Louisiana Purchase took place, when the national administration quashed indictments charging some fourteen of the Kingfish's henchmen with income-tax evasion. It is supposed that this was done in exchange for the support of the state machine.

Attorney General Frank Murphy has already done a good deal to set at rest the fears of those who believed that the Third Louisiana Purchase would now be witnessed, with a wholesale whitewashing of the local politicians. He has indicted two of Huey's three heirs, Seymour Weiss and ex-Governor Richard Leche. The cases against these two men look formidable and it seems not unlikely that they may share the experience of boss Tom Pendergast of Kansas City, now doing a neat little stretch in a federal penitentiary. Even better evidence of Mr. Murphy's good intentions will come if and when he cracks down on the third member of Louisiana's ruling triumvirate, Mayor Maestri of New Orleans. If Louisiana gossip is at all reliable, Maestri has been mixed up in a number of things which ought to interest the federal government quite as much as have the affairs of Leche and Weiss. It is said that he, also, has been in the oil business, although the basis of his fortune is New Orleans real estate. Mayor Maestri owns a good deal of property in the red-light district, and has supplemented his earnings from it by other transactions with the denizens of that quarter. It is widely believed that he is a warm personal friend of "Lucky" Luciano, who belied his nickname by letting Tom Dewey send him up the river to Sing Sing. A great deal of what is rotten in Louisiana will have to be cleaned up locally; but the federal government, if it finally means business, can help a lot.

HAMILTON BASSO

Czechia Under the Nazis

IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS dispatches from Prague have reported redoubled official efforts by the Protectorate government and the press to discourage "dreams of resurrection." First, President Emil Hacha appealed to the Czech population to "forget the past once and for all and to unite with the leaders of the nation in a frank and sincere endeavor to cooperate with the Reich." Then Georg Havelka, Minister of Transportation, urged the Czechs in a radio speech to "adapt themselves to German aims rather than nourish unfounded hopes or believe in foolish dreams." Adolf Hruby, leader of the new Unity Party, was dismissed along with some of the party members and in their places were put "new personalities whose principal aim will be to unite the Czech population in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

understanding and coöperation with the protecting power." And finally all Czech newspapers published articles, obviously inspired in Berlin, warning "loyal" Czechs not to listen to the rumors of hidden enemies, agents of foreign powers and instigators of war.

Letters of friends who remained in the country, the testimony of foreign visitors, reports of refugees and accounts of workers in the underground movement are all in agreement: the period of shocked paralysis—the first consequence of the Nazi invasion on March 15—is over. The Czech nation's wish to live and her will to resist are roused once again.

The foreigner who roams casually through the cities and villages of the Protectorate may find few signs of this. But one who knows the Czech people will observe hundreds of small symptoms. He will notice that a period of Czech history is repeating itself on another scale and under changed circumstances, but with essentially the same goals and similar methods as in the past. As in the time of the struggle against the Hapsburgs, the spirit of Zizka and of the "brave soldier Schweik" are in evidence.

Schweik is the soldier Jaroslav Hasek described in his famous book, "The Adventures of the Brave Soldier Schweik in the World War." Schweik's sly strategy was to avoid unpleasant military orders by feigning a genial stupidity. Here are examples of the way his method is used in Prague today:

An arrogant SS storm-trooper, wearing the black uniform with a death's head insignia, jumps on a crowded trolley car. He pushes his way up to the conductor and asks, in German, which stop is right for the Prague German University. The conductor shrugs. He does not understand German. The storm-trooper shows him a slip with the address written in Czech. Still the conductor is elaborately sorry; he cannot understand what the storm-trooper wants. "Does no one in the car speak German?" the storm-trooper asks. No one answers, although there are several badly concealed smiles. The storm-trooper rages and yells. He threatens the conductor. Finally he gets off the trolley. While the row is in progress the car passes the University, now almost out of sight in the distance.

A German Army truck is in front of the General Post Office. A German army officer is supervising the Czech workmen unloading heavy boxes marked, in red letters, Handle With Care. The officer is nervous about the way the boxes are being carried. "Be careful," he says in awkward, memorized Czech. The workmen are elaborately cautious. They chant the officers' words after him, "Be careful, be careful," imitating his broken accent. But suddenly—how could it have happened?—a box slips and smashes on the Post Office steps. The officer is furious, so furious, indeed, that he frightens a second workman into dropping his box too. The men are broken-hearted. What a terrible pity! They deplore the accidents just as Schweik did when he had committed one of his ingenious jobs of artistic bungling.

One of Constantin von Neurath's closest colleagues is staying in a lovely villa in the cottage quarter of Prague. Two Czech policemen are on patrol outside the garden gate; ten steps to the right, ten steps to the left, just according to their orders. A German official is leaving the house. As he is about to enter his car he notices a leaflet pasted on the garden wall near the gate. He summons one of the Czech patrol. "What is this? What is written here? Translate it into German." The patrolman salutes smartly. "Yours obediently, Sir. It says 'Hitler is a gangster!' Sir, 'and must be driven from the country he has stolen.' Thank you, Sir." The officer turns a furious crimson. "And you let it hang here on the wall! Didn't you see it?" The patrolman salutes again. "Yours obediently, Sir, yes, Sir. But we have been ordered to march ten steps to the right and ten to the left, and not a single step more in either direction. Thank you, Sir."

Jan Zizka, the Hussite leader of the fourteenth century, believed that Bohemia should be defended against invaders not by artifice, but by stubborn force. His twentieth-century descendants, many of them, have inherited his way of thinking. German storm-troopers and soldiers never walk alone on the streets of Prague after dark. The former Minister of National Defense, Machnik, who finally favored capitulation to the Nazis, was attacked one night on a dark street and severely beaten.

For the benefit of the press, and especially the press photographers, the Nazis occasionally set up a soup-kitchen in some public square to feed, out of their generosity, the poor Czech population. Sometimes, when they are offered a pot of hot soup, the Czechs refuse with proud scorn. And once in a while an old woman, at the risk of her skin, spits into the pot or spills the "broth of shame" out onto the ground.

In spite of the rigid bans, foreign-news broadcasts come from Strasbourg, London and Moscow. Radio stores are doing a rushing business. And a great many people listen in for the two perambulating short-wave stations of the underground movement. One is in Bohemia and the other in Moravia, broadcasting every evening between nine and ten o'clock.

There are even jokes about the Nazi terror. When von Neurath was on his way to Prague the Gestapo summoned the local officials and made them promise that there would be at least fifteen brass bands of welcome in every quarter of the city. The number fifteen was picked as a minimum because there had been that many for Thomas Masaryk's funeral. The next day, when von Neurath arrived, the Gestapo was astounded to find more than twenty brass bands in every quarter. "How did you do it?" the officials were asked. "It was easy," they replied. "We simply said that Benes, the Czecho-Slovak Legion and our allies, the Russians, were on their way."

F. C. WEISKOPF

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Washington Notes

Pittsburgh Plus-Sign

IN GIVING LEADERSHIP to the recent Pittsburgh convention of Young Democratic clubs, the White House advisers partially made up for what I, at least, think were their political blunders in the last session of Congress. With the talented Mr. Barry Bingham—Louisville, Kentucky, publisher—as spokesman, they behaved at Pittsburgh like veterans. The strong, healthy enthusiasm for Mr. Roosevelt and the New Deal that exists among rank-and-file Democrats was given a chance to express itself, uncomplicated by the personal animosities that have beset the dealings of the White House advisers with Congress. When Senator Pepper mentioned Mr. Roosevelt's name, the Young Democrats—according to reports reaching Washington—all but tore their seats from the floor in a gust of fighting zeal. They provided a spectacle that anti-Roosevelt Democrats need to consider.

About three months ago, the Young Democrats' national executive committee held a preliminary meeting at Richmond, Virginia. The liberal-minded members of the committee were disorganized, headless. The supporters of Vice President Garner, on the other hand, knew just what they were about. Skillfully directed by Mr. Earle B. Mayfield Jr., son of a former Texas Senator, they were busy with preparations to turn the Pittsburgh meeting into a pro-Garner rally. Startled by this news, the White House advisers went into action. Their final success can be judged by the fact that at the Pitsburgh meeting—except for a lame, cold declaration of the Texas delegates—Mr. Garner's name went unspoken.

Almost as significant was what happened to Social Security Administrator McNutt. In its unsubtle way, his Indiana organization seems also to have had designs on the Pittsburgh meeting. The Indiana Young Democrats were carefully chosen, and strong in numbers. Apparently Mr. McNutt's appearance was to be the signal for a great demonstration. The White House circle, since Mr. McNutt is now himself a highly placed New Dealer, did nothing to discourage these plans. As it turned out, Mr. McNutt could not meet his competition. He had to speak in the same session with Senator Josh Lee, the boy elocutionist of Kiowa County, Oklahoma. Mr. Lee mowed his listeners down, and Mr. McNutt and the authentic pro-Roosevelt spokesman, Solicitor General Jackson, both went half-unnoticed. It is to be hoped, incidentally, that Mr. Lee's great personal triumph will recommend him to the White House group. Given the opportunity, Mr. Lee could be as useful to the New Deal as, say, the much-petted Senator Byrnes.

The dominating personality at the Pittsburgh meeting was Mayor Ed Kelly of Chicago. His protegé, Mr. Homer Mat Adams, was chosen as the Young Democrats' new national president. Mr. Kelly must now be regarded as the single most powerful organization boss within the New Deal ranks. If Mr. Farley is to be looked on as no longer pro-Roosevelt—as I believe he must be—the New Dealers have no other comparable ally. Provided his relations with the Horner faction of the Illinois Democratic organization remain in their present peaceful state, Mr. Kelly will control more pro-Roosevelt delegates at next year's convention than any other man.

There is nothing to be gained by disguising the fact that Mr. Kelly's vast enthusiasm for the New Deal has alarmed various New Deal puritans. As he genially boasts, Mr. Kelly started his career, more than forty years ago, as a Chicago Sanitary District "axman," and he has had many opportunities to observe the less attractive aspects of politics. With the invaluable support of Cardinal Mundelein, Attorney General Murphy and the Department of Justice are now in a vast, complicated drive against Chicago wrongdoers. Already action has been taken against Mr. William R. Skidmore, the gifted junk-yard owner, and Mr. Moses L. Annenberg, publisher, among many other enterprises, of The Daily Racing Form.

The New Deal puritans are asking whether the Chicago Democratic machine, viewing the approach of Mr. Murphy's G-men and remembering the fate of Boss Pendergast in Kansas City, is not feigning a devotion to Mr. Roosevelt for the most coldly practical reasons. This is something about which it is difficult to judge here in Washington. To state the case in mild terms, there are associates of Secretary Ickes who do not toss their hats in the air when Mr. Kelly's name is mentioned. On the other hand, many administration members with an acquaintance with Chicago politics have great faith in Mr. Kelly. He is not to be confused with Mr. Pat Nash, the now enfeebled boss of the Chicago machine, they warn. Mr. Kelly has made heroic, if unheralded, efforts to bring order and decency into the Democratic organization. When and if the Murphy lightning strikes, it will not hit Mr. Kelly or his associates.

Before the last session of Congress is forgotten, a word ought to be said about the resuscitation of the La Follette civil-liberties committee. That was a liberal victory, gained against an overwhelmingly hostile or indifferent Senate, and it is something of which liberals should be proud. In part, it is proof of the reward that the simple virtue of courage will bring. In the session's closing hours, Senator Schwellenbach, in his round-eyed, calm, unruffled way, told Mr. Barkley that no further business could be transacted until continuation of the committee was decided on. When the Senate leadership discovered that Mr. Schwellenbach had no fears of hostile publicity, that he was deaf to compromises, that he could not be stampeded or threatened, it collapsed. Mr. Roosevelt deserves credit for his single-handed conversion of Senator Byrnes, from whose committee on audit and control the civil-liberties committee had to seek its funds. But primarily the victory is due to the persistency, political brains and capacity for unexpected friendships of Mr. Gardner Jackson, representative of Labor's Non-Partisan League.

Washington is impatiently awaiting an explanation of a new mystery man, Colonel Carl Lewis Estes, of Texas, now chief mentor of Governor James of Pennsylvania. Mr. James is the hand-picked candidate of the most reactionary group in the Republican Party, Messrs. Pew, Grundy, Weir and associates. As it is well known, this group is prepared to go to any lengths to beat Mr. Roosevelt, should he run again, and is reported to look favorably on a conservative

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Republican-Democratic coalition. Colonel Estes comes from Mr. Garner's state, and, in a recent announcement, spoke highly of Mr. Garner. An imaginative and suspicious observer might almost guess that dickering between the Republicans and the Garnerites had begun. Colonel Estes is a man worth keeping an eye on.

Washington T. R. B.

Other People's Money

Tomorrow Cloudy

THE WORLD OF TOMORROW, out on the Flushing flats, seems to be conforming to the modern pattern and is rapidly becoming the Deficit of Tomorrow. It begins to look now as if the World of Tomorrow may turn out to be a 100-percent loss, maybe a little more, which is quite a record.

The statements given out to newspapers, while apparently quite correct, nevertheless leave the impression that somehow the great circus is going to manage to muddle through. But the figures published must make rather gloomy reading for the bondholders who put their faith in the coming era and in the showmanship of Dr. Grover Whalen, raised, you will recall, a little prematurely to that high eminence only last June by New York University.

I gather from the financial report of the Fair that it had outstanding bonds of $27,829,000. It has liquidated some of these but it has also contracted other debts which amount now to $5,819,000—unpaid contractors' bills and bank loans. This makes a total of $33,648,000. It has got to meet the day-to-day costs of running the show and make in addition this $33,648,000 in order to come out even. Can it do this?

From the opening of the Fair to August 2, the revenues over and above daily operating costs were $3,871,000. There is, of course, no reason to suppose that it will do much better than this in the remaining three months—since during September and October the summer-holiday season will be over. And furthermore the admission is now only fifty cents on Saturday and Sunday instead of seventy-five with no very important increase in the weekly attendance. If the Fair can show another $4,000,000 in the next three months it will be very lucky. Assuming it does, it will have $8,000,000 to apply to its outstanding obligations of $33,648,000, leaving $25,648,000.

But when it is done with the show, it is supposed to clear away the debris—get the buildings off the grounds and turn the place over to the city in shipshape order, which will doubtless take several million dollars.

Under the circumstances the prospect of the bondholder getting back any important part of his money looks extremely slim. Of course the Fair may run for another year. What that will do, naturally, remains to be seen, but it seems inconceivable, standing at this point, that it can do more than salvage a small part of the loss in the second year. The Fair is doubtless an artistic and entertainment success. But it looks like one of the biggest fiscal flops in amusement history.

The Commonwealth and Southern Corporation, having turned over its operating properties in Tennessee to the TVA for a handsome sum—so handsome that the deal has been acclaimed as a great victory for Mr. Willkie—prints a full-page advertisement in the newspapers exulting over the fact that it has handed to the state of Tennessee "a $2,800,000 tax problem." The point is that when the Commonwealth owned these properties it paid the state and various local communities that much in taxes. But now that these properties are owned by the government they will be free from taxes and where will the people of Tennessee get this $2,800,000 in taxes which they are about to lose?

But the people of Tennessee ought not to be fooled by this. Who paid this $2,800,000 to the government there in the past? The Commonwealth and Southern Corporation of course. But where did it get the money? Out of the people of Tennessee. The taxes were added to the light-and-power bills and paid by the people who used light and power in Tennessee. The government, which will now operate these plants, will have no right to include those taxes in the bills. But the state and cities, if they raise this sum by taxes in other ways, will not be imposing upon their people any burden they did not carry when the Commonwealth was operating. And just suppose that the new management gives them light and power at a reduced rate, indeed at a greatly reduced rate, will not the people of Tennessee be very much in pocket on the whole transaction?

The idea that states and cities must not own and operate their light-and-power plants, but must permit private corporations to do so, in order that the cities and states may collect taxes out of the corporations, is just about the thinnest argument that can be addressed to an intelligent people.

What will happen to this enterprise remains to be seen, of course. It all depends on the character of the management which will superintend its operations. But if it works out as it is hoped, the people of Tennessee will save on the light-and-power bills enough to pay that $2,800,000 some other way and still have an excellent sum in pocket as a bonus.

The public has felt a little cheated because the Mendelssohn bank failure in Amsterdam did not develop into a sensation of some sort. It had all the stage settings but the big story, the great scene at the end of the second act, did not materialize. But there is one deep significance in it. That arises out of the implication in the failure that the external credit of France is not so good. The Mendelssohn—or better the Mannheimer—Company failed because it took two huge issues of bonds and a lot of French treasury paper and could not sell the former to the public of Europe. France got the money but the bankers got the ax. It does not argue well for nations to find their credit in a bad way even before war begins. Germany's has been dead for some years—and Italy's. But France and England are supposed to have kept theirs healthy. There must come a time in Europe when one way or another these countries will have to deal with this question of their credit and then some rearrangements are going to be in order throughout the world.

JOHN T. FLYNN

Because Heywood Broun is still on vacation, his column is omitted this week. —THE EDITORS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Vanguard Underground

THOSE WITHIN STRIKING DISTANCE of New York don't have to spend many evenings in the theatre and night-club belt to find how far "comedy" may be from the truly comic. On the legitimate stage this year the big smash was an Olsen-Johnson variety show that covered up a third-run S. Z. Poli bill partly by appeal to the antiquarian instinct and partly by giving the audience a hotfoot. The "straight" comedy drama was most successful in "No Time for Comedy," in which S. N. Behrman justified his title by working up for half an act to a punch line that wouldn't get a smile around the hydrant at Forty-first and Broadway or in any bar with a good smell and a man behind it by the name of Danny. I am not going to review the season, but there was one funny vaudeville turn in the long and earnest hours of "The Streets of Paris," there was Bea Lillie and there was Jimmy Durante; there was the "Hot Mikado" and there were some new acts in "Pins and Needles," and that is the end of the sentence.

I believe the only new thing originating in the Times Square sector was the act of the Wiere Brothers in the Robitchek vaudeville revival, and these talented crazy men from England disappeared after a few bookings in the direction of South America. (There was a terrific laugh act around last year, in the fellow who lectured on the dunking of doughnuts—but he too is gone and it doesn't count.) What I mean is that this year there was no growing place for that wild and wonderful thing: comedy as something to laugh over, comedy as a spontaneous absurdity which creates on the instant a completely new world, and on the next instant hits it over the head with a bag of flour.

There was nothing like the Elsa Maxwell show of last season, and Rags Raglan is back in burlesque, which is under a cloud; there was nothing like the Gertrude Stein show of some years before, and the "Little" shows of some years before that. There wasn't even a legitimate comedy so good as "What a Life," recently sponged. The only thing to break away from Olsen and Johnson, Behrman and Coward, Rose and Reinhardt (much alike, this last pair: both about as funny, both laying out three million to get one back, and thriving on it), is a little amateurish affair playing in an underground lower-Seventh Avenue cancer-pit known as the Vanguard, which in former years has rung to the cracked bell-tones of Joe (Oral History) Gould. It is a group of five calling themselves The Revuers, playing a cabaret act on a packing-box stage before a six-foot home-made backdrop, managing to be lyrical-satirical-pastoral-tragical most of their time, which is two-a-day except Sunday and Monday.

Well, sir, I want to tell, sir: these five kids (three boys and two girls) have started something. It isn't only the success of their show, but the effect such a success will have on the people who have to work and contend with show business—which steadily proceeds on the assumption that Bert Lahr is popular, therefore buy Bert Lahr, and if you can't get him, get the best copy a promise will buy. The stage never visualized such screwball material as the act of Clayton, Jackson and Durante until three madmen (one Clayton, one Jackson, one Durante) began to tear some side-street joint down every night with routines they had worked up out of their own heads—not out of the Rudy Vallée program. The high-collar section of the stage never could have dreamed of such a magnificent snide as Bill Fields, with a talking dog (and if Flo Ziegfeld were around today, maybe you think he wouldn't have had those Wiere Brothers tied up in a contract you couldn't have sprung with an acetylene torch). The stage—especially today, with the best talent gravitating toward Hollywood—needs new blood, but never wants to be caught with it showing as a stain on the hands.

So it takes people with push and talent to show these slug-a-beds what is to be done. The Village Vanguard Revuers obviously haven't had the knockabout drilling of a Fields or a Durante. Their shows are ragged and in many ways an illustraton of how merely speaking a line is as far from putting it over as no line at all. Singly, they haven't anything like the talent either. In the short fellow with the intense dumb stare they possibly have one natural future comedian. But collectively—conceiving, working out, presenting their material—they have a conception of stage ends and means that you could shop around for all year without matching.

Their show varies—certain nights it is on such a pattern, certain other nights it is not. They work a thing into the program, giving no specific credits. If it seems to flop they leave it, or try to get it into better shape. If it goes with a bang among their special and I'm afraid too-small audience, they keep it in—and try to get it into better shape. They have kept from being broken up by fancy offers to individuals with a united-front anonymity unique in the business, and are now booked as a unit into the Rainbow Room, where they hope to get the best numbers of their several theme shows into a fool-proof variety act. They can hardly miss because they know a good idea when they've got one, and they know how to get it and keep it fresh—the ridiculous in straightface, the easy animated New Yorker cartoons.

I won't try to describe the acts, for I found that one of their most notorious numbers had been so well described in the prints that when I finally caught the show, it fell as flat as bed linen, from anticipation of the absurd and unexpected—"Young Man with a Kazoo." But I can say that you could hardly go and be disappointed. As a charter member of both the stay-awayers and the walker-outers clubs, I will confess freely that after sitting through my first show there I not only clapped my hands pink but bought three drinks in a row purely out of some obscure instinct of approbation. The body of the thing may falter, but the spirit is unmistakably there and all to the good. These young people have seen the uselessness of trying to crash Equity as walk-ons in the creaky vehicles of someone whose name can be spelled in light bulbs. So out of their own heads they have made a theatre of their own, the way a theatre should be made—working from the bottom up. *But* working, *but* up. They are not only a cheerful sight in the shrewd gambit of their own comment on things as we find them: they are a reminder that the theatre as a play for people is not the property of the Shuberts, or of Jed Harris, or of Variety or Theatre Arts. Becoming too money-covered or tightly corseted, the theatre goes underground and bobs up again, as gay and cocky and intimately appealing as ever.

OTIS FERGUSON

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Bandwagon

Shop with Greenville merchants who advertise in this paper and save money. – *Notice in The Greenville, Illinois, Advocate.*

Lead Kindly Blight

The real danger to collectivism, then, lies in the educating, beyond kite-flying days, of the average workingman, and I strongly recommend the closing of our public libraries, which are badly lighted anyway. – *A letter from Leo Halbmaier, printed in The Chicago Daily News.*

Continent Still Isolated

IMMUNE from the INTERNATIONAL SITUATION. Aldwick Bay—Houses on this attractive seaside estate for sale or to let. Illustrated brochure. 20 Bloomsbury Square, London, W. C. 1. – *Advertisement in The London Daily Telegraph.*

The Perils of Stalin

Using a hydraulic shaft and water jets, Russia develops a "manless coal mine." Thus relieved of his chore, the restless miner may give his full time to striking. – *From The Los Angeles Times' editorial page.*

Suffer Little Children—Weekdays Only

"The Old Maid," in which Bette Davis is starred as an unwed mother, may be shown, *un*cut, for six days a week. On the Sabbath it may not be shown in Massachusetts. Illegitimate children are offensive to morals only on Sundays. – *From the New York World-Telegram.*

Or, At Least, a Three-Foot Chain

Lieutenant Baskervyle Glegg, a member of the British mission, had a steel dispatch case attached to his wrist by a three-foot length of chain which suggested the British still possess some military secrets. – *From a London dispatch in The New York Times.*

Starting from Scratch

Cootiettes, cooties and friends will congregate in Room One, Veterans' Building, this evening for a dance and reunion given by the Ladybugs' Cootiette Clan. No. 24. Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary. – *From The San Francisco Chronicle.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column and $1 will be paid for each item used. Address The Bandwagon, care of The New Republic. Please enclose the original clipping. – THE EDITORS

Correspondence

The Jewish National Army

SIR: "The Jewish National Army" by Allan A. Michie (in The New Republic for August 9) represents as a large-scale official Zionist activity the work of a minority group which was forced out of the Zionist organization some years ago, and whose anti-Arab terror most Jews are attempting to stop.

It tells only of the work of the Irgun Zevai Leumi, an arm of the Revisionist, Jewish Fascist group in Palestine. . . . The statement that the IZL "is the only Jewish organization now carrying on armed defense activities against Arab bands" is an outright lie. For three years Jewish settlements have been defended by the Zionist defence called "Haganah" with a registered membership of 100,000. . . .

ALFRED J. KAHN, Executive Secretary
New York City Avukah American Student Zionist Federation

SIR: Allan A. Michie's article is a shocking piece of disguised fascist propaganda. The Irgun Zevai Leumi, the self-styled "army" which it praises, is a creature of the Revisionist Party occupying in the Zionist movement a position analogous to the fascist parties in Germany and Italy. . . .

It is paradoxical and unfortunate, but inevitable, that Jews are not immune to fascism. Living, as the bulk of them do, in countries where fascist methods have steadily triumphed, the young hot-heads, the psychopaths, the despairing have in some small measure turned to the Revisionist Party. But this is no reason to exaggerate the importance of the movement. It plays today, as always, an insignificant role in Palestine. Zionism today represents the logical outgrowth of the best moral and historical traditions of the Jewish people. . . .

Mr. Michie's article seems to be fairly sound in describing the methods of refugee smuggling into Palestine. He is mistaken in claiming credit for the IZL without describing other agencies at work. It should be remembered that prior to the MacDonald White Paper, the Jewish Agency was able by cooperation with the government to make Palestine the most important source of migration for Jews in the world. Since then, non-Revisionists have organized illegal migration on a large scale which is independent of the IZL.

The catch is that the IZL makes a "business" of refugee-running, for which the refugees pay heavily in cash. They receive in return bad quarters, rotten food, irresponsible crews and have frequently been robbed of all their possessions. Moreover, most of the vessels reported captured have been those of the Revisionists. The non-Revisionist underground railway charges the minimum, supervises the voyage to the end, and assumes responsibility for the immigrant after he reaches Palestine. . . .

New York City ELEAZAR LIPSKY

SIR: "The Jewish National Army," besides being a straight piece of Revisionist propaganda, contains several inaccuracies. . . . Here is one dubious statement: "Its secret Palestine radio station broadcasts in Hebrew and English twice a day." A station broadcasting as frequently as twice a day can be located easily by a process of radio triangulation. . . .

Michie creates the erroneous impression that the IZL is the only organization aiding extra-legal immigration into Palestine. . . . The most damning indictment of the whole article is that it tries to present the discredited Revisionist program in a palatable form. What is this program? To quote from the article

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

itself, it is as follows, "The IZL is convinced that the Jews must be prepared to back up, with a Jewish army, their demands for a sovereign state." Their program is forcible subjection of the Arabs as the way of making Palestine a non-minority center for the Jews. There is no mention of Arab-Jewish unity as a possible solution. . . .

Brooklyn, N. Y. NATHAN MILSTEIN

On Being a Crank

SIR: You might convey to B. B. ("I Am About to Become a Crank," August 16) the intelligence, which will doubtless be pleasing to him, that he has at least one soldier marching with him in his crank crusade. My personal specialty is seeking ways and means to bring painfully dreadful, if not lethal, confusion to the swinish offspring of four-letter males and bed-swervers who introduce into busses, trams and kindred public conveyances smoldering (and usually sub-inferior) cigars, and stinking pipes, ignoring "No Smoking" warnings, heeded by most smokers (I smoke) who try to practice decent respect for the rights and nostrils of others.

Also the hurry-up lads who light up in non-smoking railway cars, minutes, sometimes, before the train halts at their stops. Also the business or professional man who, after one has gained an appointed interview with him, perhaps after much and long effort, permits casual callers on the telephone numerously to interrupt and disrupt the interview.

New York City ROBERT HAMOND MURRAY

SIR: B. B. is happy to observe that this country is still free for cranks. Is he so sure? Things are different in Chicago, at any rate, as the case of John Zagar shows. One day last month the intrepid Zagar, sitting at a lunch counter, decided that he had had enough tobacco smoke with his food. All accounts agree that he snatched a cigarette away from a woman who was blowing smoke in his face. It appears uncertain whether he also slapped her. (Would you care to put yourself on the record there, Mr. B.?) Zagar—obviously sanest of men—was "turned over for examination." Mr. B. had better have a little talk with himself before he starts out with his binoculars, his loaded revolver and his pitchfork. It could happen there, too.

No, the crank business isn't what—if you will forgive me—it's cranked up to be. No more dissents on my part. Unless the old streak crops out, I'm settling down to discovering the romance of being a statistic.

Chicago, Ill. C. M. NELSON

Jazz Fantasy

SIR: This concerns Otis Ferguson's review of my book "American Jazz Music" in your issue of August 16. The only parts I didn't think were legitimate criticism were his allusions to John Hammond Jr. Nowadays I often have the feeling of being a sort of Custer's last-man at the massacre of Hammond. At any rate, Ferguson, in the columns of The New Republic and elsewhere, is beginning to sound like a man psychopathically haunted by a fate named Hammond, and in the middle of the ghost-fear I was stepped on and didn't like it. If I happen to feel that Henderson's band in '27 and Armstrong's in '29 and Henderson's in '34 (all heard before Hammond came into my life) and Basie's in '38 played as good jazz as I've ever listened to, if I happen to replay the Armstrong Okehs more than any records I own, does that convict me of "accepting attitudes" or of "too little independent thinking" or, to paraphrase one of Otis's wisecracks, of talking through Hammond's absence of hat? Otis should know that if you have a phonograph and play a lot of music repeatedly, you get to know what you like, and with a better instrument than anything that might be described as "independent thinking"—the ear. Or, if he wants to argue the point, I'll be the last to object. But what with Malcolm Cowley explaining how Dos Passos felt when his translator was shot, and Otis reading my mind during those rare, but resonant, evenings spent with Hammond, The New Republic really should set up in the clairvoyance game. In that department, it has developed a fine professional plausibility—but is it correct? Please have Otis write about the music, and about what others write about it, but please have him avoid those glib certainties as to where others get their reactions. As he has suggested himself, there is too much immaturity in all this jazz talk.

Oakland, N. J. WILDER HOBSON

SIR: Hobson is right and I must apologize for the hasty and misleading expression of an idea. As he does not remark, my review of his "American Jazz Music" was favorable—in fact more of a boost than the work would have deserved if it had not been for a certain pioneer quality. But I should never have let it seem that Hobson had not listened to his own records and got his own appreciation out of them. My point had nothing to do with ghosts and referred to something that goes beyond the range of the immediate ear, into theory, origins, influences. It is in this field of speculation that thought has been most crippled and restricted to stereotypes; and it is in this field that John Henry Hammond Jr. has been the main factor in cutting the rubber stamps so widely used. Hobson need never have seen Hammond and can have listened to a million records all by himself. Those sections of his book which treat background and development rest pretty solidly on this accepted but catchphrase way of thinking, without enough reëxamination or investigation. You do not after all write a book with your ear, excuse me.

New York City OTIS FERGUSON

From The New Republic Mail Bag

Jerry Schimer of St. Louis, Missouri, praises "Seven Poets of a Crisis Year" in the August 9 issue. His only criticism is that "Selden Rodman probably selected the poems which would best support his thesis that the new work 'reflects the uncertainty at home and the pessimism abroad.'" . . . Although we specifically promised to print no more letters on the Broun-Catholic Church controversy, we make a single exception in the case of James S. Rodell of New Canaan, Connecticut. Mr. Rodell, in answer to Granville Hicks' letter (August 2), asserts that the Catholic Church is generally reactionary, just as "Heywood Broun has been generally progressive." Mr. Rodell asks Heywood: "If your heart was in your recent efforts to save the Loyalists' cause, is it not strange that you ally yourself with the great institution whose heart was set against the cause?"

Adelaide Schulkind writes on behalf of the Henry Black Committee of 104 Fifth Avenue, New York City, for funds to help Henry Black, known to many as "the Librarian of Labor," who has been paralyzed since birth and can be cured if he gets the necessary money. . . . The Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, 125 West Forty-fifth Street, New York City, still need money to return disabled American war veterans to their homes and to restore them to health. . . . Morris Milgram, state secretary of the Workers' Defense League of 138 Baldwin Avenue, Jersey City, New Jersey, writes about the annual Labor Day week-end at Camp Butler, New Jersey. Further information can be obtained from Mr. Milgram. . . . R. S. Wood, of Chicago, Illinois, who buys The New Republic regularly on the newsstand, thinks Ferdinand Lundberg made an excellent suggestion in "America's 60 Families"; ". . . these publications [The Nation and The New Republic] have failed in the opportunity to build large influential circulations by a dramatic presentation of material. . . ."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Veblen on the Munich Pact

AS AN INTERPRETER of the Munich pact Veblen is somewhat at a disadvantage.[1] The last of his scribble dates from the first year of the World War and the great event to which his comment moves lies a quarter of a century ahead. But if he had to write without knowledge of later acts, his was the gift of sensing the currents which move beneath the stream of things; and a larger sweep and a deeper insight have more than atoned for the years of history his essay never knew. In sharp contrast with many a current book upon "'the Teutonic menace," which flares, sets down an indictment and leaves outrageous wrong veiled in mystery, Veblen recites the circumstance that gives quality to the German culture as calmly as if he were laying bare the strange ways of some far-off folk. The result is that, more than any other, he makes reasonable—even if not admirable—the Nazi State on its way.

An estimate is likely to fade as it comes across the years. But only in superficials is Veblen dated. As the son of an immigrant he got his vocabulary out of the dictionary. The array of words, the studied qualifications, the gestures of authenticity with which he fits out his sentences are the punctilios of polite scholarship. The overgeneral statement, which reads as if it were an induction from vast experience, is a device intended to give probative weight to an opinion. The ceremonial rubric in which his thought is put is halfway acceptance, if halfway ironic comment upon, the pretentiousness of arid scholarship. As one who had strange things to say, he had to outvie the erudite in his way of saying it; and protective coloring became a necessity. His footnotes, for example, invite glimpses down scandalous byways and exhibit the utmost in pedantic decorum. Yet, trappings of style and current concretion aside, the book does not reveal its age. An admirable introduction by Joseph Dorfman covers the years between, makes relevant the argument and restores the book to currency. A deft touch here and there is enough; for a catastrophe such as the War—or even the Peace—has not broken the continuity of the culture. Read Fascist for Imperial Germany, write the Führer for the Emperor, remember that the State is still *über alles*—and it all goes for today.

It is true that the account is not pivoted upon democracy vs. dictatorship. Not that a sharp antithesis is lacking. At Munich it was the English system against the German; and in intent the book is a comparison and correlation between the cases of Germany and England. But our current symbols are too forgetful of realities and too charged with emotion to carry Veblen's analysis. He knows that in England popular government masks an oligarchy, that the dominant concern of policy is not the common man. He understands that the German State rests upon almost feudal loyalties nurtured into the very usages of the people. The freedom of the British subject is only moderately greater than that which falls to the lot of the German subject. The difference is largely in the sanctions through which conformity is maintained. As a new nation, still in its days of flush and swagger, the German way is crude, direct, overbearing, while England has smuggled her unctuous tyrannies into the proprieties themselves. It is duty and contumacy against dignity, caste, precedent and precedence; a quasi-manorial police opposed to flirtation with anarchy. In terms of an industrial absolutism, such as "astuteness in ambushing the community's loose change," Germany must play second fiddle to the older economy. The disciplines imposed upon the people are unlike—but such verbalisms as democracy and dictatorship cannot carry their differences.

To Veblen, instead, the clash is between rival plans for social salvation. The two peoples stem from the same mongrel stocks and differ not one whit in race. The folkways from which current use and wont derive are flexible; their common ancestors could even take conversion to Christianity without moral shock. Alike they are nimble in turning cultural stealings to account. In England three centuries of peace and petty trade endowed the individual with inalienable rights. In Germany, overrun by war, the locusts ate up these centuries and personal obeisance remained intact. England left money matters to the market; Germany made even the captain of industry vassal to the State. Thus England developed the machine process within a political framework of natural liberty, while Germany borrowed the new industrialism as instrument to the dynastic state. A single technology, divergence in cultural patterns—therein lies the lasting antithesis.

Such a situation holds impending conflict. In the struggle the machine process is alike urge and resource. A system of handicraft may thrive locally; to make the most of modern technology requires wide area, assorted resources, a myriad of markets. In techniques Germany has the advantage. As the creator England is held in leash, staggered by the dead hand of past performance. As the borrower Germany experiences none of the drawbacks of innovation. She has been able to select, to improve, to be up to date. In opportunity England still has the better of it. Her insular position has increased her natural assets and given her ample space whereon to operate. Germany, with meager resources, is the victim of her Continental position. The machine process demands materials and markets; materials and markets are questions of frontier. If frontiers are to be pushed back, the people must obey, manly virtues prevail, industrialism flame with the martial spirit. The tramp, tramp, tramp towards a Germany large, varied and rich enough to sustain a national economy—which Veblen heard before the World War—still resounds.

Such is the theme—but about the theme art plays with its overtones of incident, belief and usage. The feudal regime and the industrial order, in their tangle of compromises, move down the pages. Magic rubs elbows with matter-of-fact, the occult vies with the reasonable, sufficient reason is transmuted into efficient cause. In England royalty becomes a pious legend and a decorative bill of expense; discipline is undermined by Protestant adventures into unstandardized devotion; a commonwealth is woven out of expediencies. In Germany a morale of evangelical militancy appears; liberty grows into freedom to give and to follow orders; the body politic comes to live by the nepotism of Providence. A people addicted to industry and thrift have helped Germany fully to exploit the machine process; a dominance in England of a leisure class has largely absorbed the surplus which the coming of tech-

[1] Imperial Germany and the Industrial Revolution, by Thorstein Veblen. Reprinted with an Introduction by Joseph Dorfman. New York: The Viking Press. 365 pages. $3.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nology has brought. Her people know how to cherish sinecures, to keep devout futilities abreast of the times, to encourage "wasteful expenditures euphemistically spoken of as a rising standard of living." Germany has learned to employ her population; she has fused the sporting urge into the military establishment and set even the would-be noble to work. England, toying in a pensive mood, has contrived in the gentleman a mechanism for waste "as good as human infirmity will permit." These pages explain the shift from divinity and heraldry to engineering; expound the predatory virtues of the folktale; parade patriotism, piety and prerogative in gaudy attire; expose the means by which Germany made a rapid recovery from the War; reveal the secret of the tremendous increase in industrial efficiency under the Third Reich; attest the divine gift—as Anglican as it is Teuton—of diplomatic recrimination.

In all of this Veblen, in scholarly aloofness, refuses to be trapped into striking a balance, arguing merits or taking sides. His pose met with initial success. The book was banned from the mails by the Postmaster General during the War as pro-German, and a committee of the Reichstag at that time found it preached "the inevitability of a trade war against Germany." But, in a matter of such futurity, even a Veblen cannot conceal his values. In turning resources to current account the German system has the edge.

But he is well aware of "the harsh aloofness of irresponsible tyranny," archaic cultural furniture, arrested spiritual development. Its great want is in freedom for curiosity, the creative urge, the thrust at novelty without which every culture takes to dry rot. Still he cannot overlook the pauper humanity which lies beneath the English disguise; and, in an irrepressible aside, he shudders at the second-class results which American business has obtained from superlative resources.

The quiet tone is in sharp contrast to recent blasts in which philippic crowds out analysis. Hence the book is not for those who condemn another nation because their ways are beyond our orbit of behavior. In fact, a concern of the essay is how a great gulf has been created between peoples, over which common sense and moral judgment do not easily pass. It is just this inability of the mind to cross the frontier which makes most of the volumes on Nazi Germany so bad and causes critics to praise them so highly. But, for the person who would bring sanity to a subject in which feeling runs high, no other work is so timely. If one would probe the failure of the late republic to fit Germany, the push into Austria, the rape of Czecho-Slovakia, the decadence of English diplomacy, the formal act of fealty by Mr. Neville Chamberlain to the Führer, the abdication of Great Britain as a Continental power, the irony of the accord at Munich, the frantic locking of the British stable after title to the stolen horse had passed, he need seek no further. No one of these things is named in the book—yet the why of them all is there.

WALTON HAMILTON

Books in Review

The Death of the Soil

THIS BOOK[1] packs a wallop that is as unsettling in its own way as a jab from the left hand of Joe Louis. Not that it is especially well-written; it isn't. Not that its repetitive technical detail about broad-base terraces and Nichols terraces and strip-cropping and the use of the black locust tree in controlling erosion is particularly fascinating. No doubt these facts are to be had in any number of pamphlets put out by Mr. Wallace's willing Department of Agriculture. But what you would never find in a mountain of pamphlets is the particular philosophy of history that emerges from the facts assembled for "Vanishing Lands." If even half of what the Messrs. Whyte and Jacks have to say is true, then practically all our publicists, sociologists and economists are, if not moon-struck idiots, at least vain wanderers in the dark.

Some years ago Mr. Joseph Wood Krutch asked a rhetorical question: "Was Europe a Success?" With Hitler on the loose, the question would seem to answer itself: man might as well live in a cave as in a Nazi brownhouse. Nevertheless, Europe has been a success and, on the evidence of the Messrs. Whyte and Jacks, maybe it is the only one of the seven continents that is capable of nourishing a sustained civilization. Every old non-European civilization the world has known—in Mesopotamia, in North Africa, in China, in the New World—has either failed with its soil structure or succumbed to the tyranny that seems to go hand in hand with farming by irrigation. Only in Europe—and in northern Europe, at that—have men ever been able to maintain a proved long-term democratic working balance with nature.

It is a silly fact that you can't support a multitude of human beings on soil that fails to keep a granular structure. It is an even sillier fact that the forest soil of northern Europe lacks this granular structure in its virgin form. Forest soils are formed by the dropping of leaves and twigs, which decay to make up a series of laminations. As long as the laminations are covered with forest litter, they stay put. Once the forest is cut down, however, the laminations act as shearing planes, thus facilitating the movement of the soil en masse. But European man, with no naturally good earth at his disposal, slowly stumbled by trial and error—and by a mixed farming that included animal husbandry—upon the secrets of creating granular soil by manuring. European man could afford to blunder in his experiments, for northern Europe has a climate that does not run to violent extremes. The rain falls gently upon France and England and Scandinavia and Germany; it soaks into the earth by slow degrees. And the ambient air is kept humid by the proximity of oceans, bays and inlets, which means that the soil stays humid, too. With just the right climate to keep soil in place, and just enough real hard

[1] Vanishing Lands, by R. O. Whyte and G. V. Jacks. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. 348 pages. $4.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

work at soil-building to keep him frugal and commonsensical, the European farmer is not apt to mine his acres in the interests of a quick profit and a speedy get-away to some other spot. A peasant, the European farmer becomes part of the landscape, a way-of-life agrarian, not a bonanza-or-bust business man.

Beyond the seas, however, in the semi-arid grasslands of North America, Australia and the Argentine, emigrants from Europe discovered a giddy temptation in acres of soil that is naturally granular in its structure. The interlacing roots of grasses tend to break the soil into discrete particles that are ideal for tilling, and, given time, decaying grass blades impart a natural richness to prairie land that is seldom found in acid forest earth. With the dream-soil of the plains to be had for the taking, Europeans in the new lands tended to forget all they had learned in fifteen centuries of intensive agriculture.

For years the lapse in memory seemed to make no difference. Moreover, the new world plains produced so much in excess of local needs that Europe traded manufactured goods for overseas grain and let her peoples multiply far beyond the Malthusian safety margin. Eventually, however, the soil of the plains deteriorated: corn and cotton, which are bare crops, naturally encourage erosion and drifting. At this point the transplanted European discovered his memory. But he also discovered that neither green manuring—the plowing under of cover crops—nor the application of organic farmyard manure worked very well in the dry climates. Green manuring seemed to remove the moisture required for wheat, and organic manures failed to decompose under low rainfall conditions. The result of undecomposed manures in the ground was a "burned" cereal crop and a greatly diminished yield.

With the failure of his ancestral wisdom, the transplanted European in western America, on the pampas and in the Australian bush, is somewhat baffled. No one knows for certain whether he can work out a permanent high-yield agriculture suited to a climate that naturally tends to produce grass-lands. If he can, then American and Australian and Argentinian civilization has a glorious future; if he can't—then Europe alone will remain. The odd thing about it is that Soviet Russia, which claims to have solved her food troubles by collective methods, is in the same boat with America, Australia and the Argentine: her commissars do not know, *for certain*, whether the steppe will keep on producing what the Russians need to feed a population of 170,000,000 people. Many devices for preserving soil fertility on the plains are now being tried, both in the American West and in the Soviet Union. Some of them seem promising, but it is too soon for the prophets to speak out with certainty.

From the many facts which Whyte and Jacks have assembled, a complete justification for economic nationalism emerges. Europe must strive for agricultural self-sufficiency lest she be dragged down eventually with the vanishing fertility of the overseas prairies. My friend Raymond Leslie Buell frequently complains that the French are crazy to raise wheat as long as there is a surplus of cheaper American grains to be had for the bidding. But the French, on the evidence of Messrs. Whyte and Jacks, are crazy like a fox. For our wheat and cotton carry-overs are not symbols of surplus wealth but of progressive soil impoverishment.

In the space at my disposal I have necessarily had to hit the high spots of "Vanishing Lands." But the book contains food for a couple of decades of hard thinking. Let our would-be Spenglers and Adam Smiths and Marxes get busy, for here, in an unpretentious volume, is material for an entire re-writing of western—and world—history.

JOHN CHAMBERLAIN

Hell's Orchards

Factories in the Field, by Carey McWilliams. Boston: Little Brown and Company. 334 pages. $2.50.

THIS BOOK had to be written. This story had to be told. John Steinbeck had given us part of it in his novel, "Grapes of Wrath," but Carey McWilliams, a young California lawyer, appointed Commissioner of Immigration and Housing by Governor Olson, gives the rest of it in its cold, horrible, statistical reality. He is Dante on a tour of what has always been supposed to be the Paradise of America. He takes you by the hand, leads you up to that edge of heaven which is California and says: "Look!" And what you see is hell, hell under the bending pear trees, hell in the vineyards and celery fields; hell in the cherry and apple orchards.

The sunkist mists dissolve and you see the real picture. You see the rich farmlands, divided up by fraudulent land grants that expropriated the actual settlers and gave million-acre ranches to a few great owners. You see these owners crying for cheap labor, and always too much of it: willing, docile, humble, "amenable" labor; "hands" that would harvest the crops, hoboes or blanket stiffs or fruit-tramps who would make no fuss over the dirt and disease, half-starvation and insecurity. Bodies, yellow, brown, black or white, that would stoop or squat over the rows of lettuce, melons, beans, asparagus; that would cut, chop, top, dry, pack, can, the brussels sprouts, cotton, beets, figs, peaches, apricots, prunes, berries; in the torrid sun, all day, for a few hundred dollars a season (with exorbitant prices charged for food at company stores. No overcharge seemed too mean for the great California farm corporations). The owners brought in successively Chinese, Japanese, Hindus, Negroes, Mexicans, Filipinos; worked them as coolie or peon labor, and, when they asked for more wages or objected to the stench and filth of their shantytowns and ditch-side squatters' camps, drove them out of the fields at bayonet's point, herded them in corrals and stockades, beat and jailed them, and even murdered—these "patient little slant-eyed people," "quiet, unaggressive Mexicans," "easy-to-handle ragheads" (Hindus).

You can't believe what they would do to men. Nine toilets to 2,800 workers (which helped bring on the terrible Wheatland riots); ten people sleeping on one straw mattress in camps without sanitation (and then charged five cents a bucket for fresh water, which had to be hauled two miles); making them eat off dirty plates so as not to "spoil" the tramps. "Step this way, folks, and see the land of sunshine!" Deaf-mute school children driven into the fields to pick peas in the broiling sun, ten hours a day, for five dollars a month; babies dying all the picking season; half the children in Mexican camps dull-witted for lack of nourishment. And still the owners lowering wages (from

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1920 to 1933 these fell from 30 cents an hour to 10 and 12½ cents); and all in the name of patriotism, red-blooded Americanism and the unctuous belief that harvesters were "lucky to be able to buzz about Beautiful California in their automobiles, enjoying its air and eating its food." To satisfy their limitless profit-hunger the growers would even run to Washington for permission to import cheap Mexican labor, and then when the season was over, would arouse the state because "Mexicans were taking away jobs from Americans." They would get deportation and exclusion laws passed; break any laws they wished; and persuade relief agencies to refuse relief to migrants. Today the Associated Farmers are trying to abolish the government camps that are the only refuge for the migratory workers.

If anyone still believes laws are made by the electorate, or that public officials carry them out, this book should disillusion them. McWilliams shows how the great growers, "frozen forever in their I," have utilized California vigilantism to foment race riots, to play off one race against another, to lower wages; and finally to lay the basis for farm fascism. You learn from this book what fascism means, not as an abstract ideology, but as concrete behavior of "farmer" corporations and utilities, how their organizations, now state and nationwide, and their propaganda, ape the Nazis. And McWilliams' sources are not visionary or hypothetical: he quotes from federal and state investigations, from farm journals, from the agriculturists and their organizations.

The cure? McWilliams believes the end of a cycle has come, with the influx of migrant white Americans, the "Okies" and "Arkies" of Steinbeck's tale. These cannot be excluded or deported when they organize. Only a native fascism will keep them down. That is why this author believes that the final cure must be a change in the form of land ownership, the break-up of the great corporation-controlled ranches and their stranglehold on the state economy. The La Follette investigation of the Associated Farmers in the fall will further dramatize McWilliams' book: together they may prove a landmark in the fate of the California migrants, a dyke in the path of spreading American fascism.

ELLA WINTER

The Oxford Keats

The Poetical Works of John Keats, edited by H. W. Garrod. New York: The Oxford University Press. 658 pages. $10.

THIS IS ANOTHER of the Oxford Press's splendid editions of the English poets. Professor H. W. Garrod has turned out a definitive text of Keats, with pages knee-deep in variants from the autograph manuscripts of the poet. These variants are sometimes interesting. Keats was so much of a cockney that he wrote "hopen" for "open," "hear" for "ear," "ear" for "hear," "sea-spry" for "sea-spray," "forster" for "foster," and—what Professor Garrod finds "hateful"—"exhalt" and "exhaltation." It is curious to realize that a poet could possess so subtle an ear and produce work of the utmost literary sophistication without ever having mastered some of the rudiments of the educated speech of his time. He thought that "forlorn" was "folorn" and wrote it so in the "Ode to a Nightingale," thereby lending it, in the famous lines, a cleaner and more bell-like sound, which was lost when it was written correctly.

Professor Garrod, in his introduction and commentary, continues to pursue the late Amy Lowell—whose rather high-handed methods have no doubt given occasion for correction—with that rancor which Dr. Johnson notes as characteristic of "scholiasts" and which he describes as "more eager and venomous than is vented by the most furious controvertist in politics."

The edition is of special interest as containing two new sonnets of Keats—from the manuscripts in the Morgan Library—which had been rejected by Miss Lowell as not authentic but which Professor Garrod accepts. They certainly sound like Keats, and they are charming. The last line of the sonnet on the badness of a sonnet of Wordsworth's on Dover, with its ironical emphasis gained by the placing of a repeated word, has the metrical voice of a master:

> All these are vile.—But viler Wordsworth's sonnet
> On Dover:—Dover!—Who *could* write upon it?

EDMUND WILSON

Little Italy

Christ in Concrete, by Pietro Di Donato, Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. $2.50.

MORE THAN any other book I have read, this first novel conveys a genuine feeling about Italians in this country working and living together. Di Donato is himself an Italian-American and a professional bricklayer, and thus has the obvious advantage of being close to his materials; but he also has the more unusual advantage of being able to write about American-Italians as they are, not as it is easy to think of them, and this despite his love for histrionics and a habit of turning on a stream-of-metaphor language that sometimes makes his approach seem more sentimental than it actually is.

"Christ in Concrete" began as a short story two years ago, in Esquire, and told about Geremio, his family, his aspirations, and how he was killed on his Job (a recurring symbol in the novel), when the structure collapsed over him and his comrades, burying him alive in mortar. With this story as the opening chapter, the novel takes up Geremio's family, Annunziata and the six children, particularly the oldest son Paul, whose development into manhood provides its chief theme. Paul inherits his father's trowel when he is only twelve and, amazingly enough, learns how to be a bricklayer.

We see him at work with other bricklayers, their everyday lives shadowed by their symbol of fear, the Job. We listen to their everyday talk and banter, and watch them in the presence of birth and death, at a wedding feast, and in their relationship to those foreigners, the Americans. These are the important things about the novel, more important than the manner in which the theme is resolved. With his showy love for words the author reminds me of someone who has just learned about the exhilarating effects of liquor. He uses them with reckless and lyrical magnificence, with the result that while he brilliantly catches the color, odor and talk of his characters, their psychology

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

remains pretty obscure. The climax of the novel, for example, which finds two points of view clashing, Paul against his mother's simple religious faith, is one of the least plausible scenes.

Di Donato has at least two stylistic mannerisms that are worth noting. One of them, the frequent omission of articles preceding nouns ("Nazone cast his trowel to scaffold"), seems in character with the rest of his prose style. The other, a little difficult for the reader not on speaking terms with Italian, consists of making the dialogue sound like a literal translation from the Italian. Undoubtedly, the purpose of this device is to suggest the flavor of the foreign language spoken by the characters; but although the results are often rich and poetical, sometimes the phraseology is unnecessarily rigid. To cite one recurring example: the Italian idiom "per piacere," meaning "please," is translated "for pleasure"; such literalness makes for absurdities in the book like, "For pleasure, do not laugh." Fortunately, the innate beauty and eloquence of the novel more than make up for minor deficiencies. JERRE MANGIONE

Democracy at War

America at War: 1917-1918, by Frederic L. Paxson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 475 pages. $3.75.

IN THIS CURIOUSLY low-keyed book, Professor Paxson tells the story of how we fought in the First World War, covering the period from April, 1917, to November, 1918. Though the narrative is lucid, it is not entirely illuminating, for it is part of Professor Paxson's method to be sparing with interpretation. His occasional remarks are therefore all the more startling—as when, on page 260, he suddenly declares: "War is a class business, in which those most likely to be maimed are the very ones whose influence in determining their service is least." Yet with this thought in his mind, he has chosen to throw his emphasis upon the development of the institutional mechanisms for carrying on the War, and upon its actual prosecution in France.

The total effect of the story is to make one realize once more that democracy cannot prosecute war without accepting dictatorial controls and expecting them to be accompanied by blank intolerance. The very quietness of Professor Paxson's narrative cannot obscure the fact that from the very beginning the United States was doomed to dictatorship. These reflections cast a sufficient chill over the pride one might otherwise take in the capacity that the country revealed for organizing and executing a most complicated job. But that pride entirely evaporates when it is recalled that all this hard work—all this lavish pouring out of men, money and materials—was for a socially destructive purpose. As we who came to maturity after the War have learned, it is just about impossible to direct a similar loyalty toward socially constructive tasks. When they are proposed, the very types of men who most vigorously forwarded the war effort are found in the opposition and all too frequently among the saboteurs. In a sense Professor Paxson's book is an ironic commentary on the values for which American democracy is prepared to sacrifice itself.

Yet there can be small doubt that a good proportion of the high officials and a greater proportion of the predestined victims of the enterprise fully believed in the purpose of their effort as it was outlined by Woodrow Wilson. The defeat of the Central Powers, and especially of Germany, was regarded as a sacred necessity. In large measure through American efforts—this narrative gives the best balanced account of the American part in winning the War I have ever seen—the end was accomplished. But toward the end of the story Professor Paxson begins to bring in bits of evidence which, I take it, he intends to build up in a subsequent volume into an explanation of why the defeat of Germany did not usher us into Utopia. He writes:

> Among the Allies, each with an end not wholly covered by the plea for safety, and some quite willing to be party to agreements to divide the spoils, the American President had to win followers to outvote their rulers. So long as peace was remote, the latter bore with him; with victory approaching, general principles were certain to be threatened by demands for quick returns. The hard-boiled statesmen who persisted in the belief that life is a succession of temporary equilibria, backed by force, may have been nearer right than Wilson; but right or wrong they feared the enemy, distrusted their allies, disliked his program, and evaded when they dared.

This puts the contradiction at the heart of the whole business very well indeed. The contradictory policies of the partners in saving the world for democracy were eventually to undermine the foundations on which democracy had to rest. We might provide the premier propagandist, marshal a huge drafted army, equip it, protect it from whores and booze, feed it doughnuts and chocolate, try to provide ships to carry it to Europe, aim to produce planes to give it "eyes" in battle—we might do all these things about which Professor Paxson so conscientiously tells us—but we could not, in the final analysis, govern the social forces that made the adventure inevitable. C. HARTLEY GRATTAN

New Books: A Reader's List

GOVERNMENT PUBLICITY, by James L. McCamy (Chicago, $2.50). A useful survey of the channels and methods by which government publicity agents distribute information, promote ideas and generally stimulate good will for the various federal executive agencies.

LOST LIBERTY? by Joan and Jonathan Griffin (Oxford, $2.50). An analysis and condemnation of the Munich surrender, by two Britons who were in Czecho-Slovakia during the events. Their vivid account confirms what we know from Gedye's "Betrayal in Central Europe," and contains hitherto unpublished documents which irrefutably prove that the French and the British were Hitler's accomplices.

TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE USSR, by Michael T. Florinsky (Macmillan, $2.50). Russia's political and economic conditions, briefly described on the basis of official sources and newspaper accounts, and judged by the abstract ("dispassionate") standards of nineteenth-century liberalism.

APOSTLE OF CHARITY: The Life of St. Vincent de Paul, by Theodore Maynard (Dial, $3). A biography of the seventeenth-century French peasant whose Christianity rebelled against the sordid poverty of the time, and whose peasant common sense created organizations for the efficient administration of the money and services he wangled from the rich for the poor. A factual, carefully documented life, but with plenty of color.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORLISS LAMONT

'Why Members of the Upper Class Go Left'

IN THIS WEEK'S ISSUE

NEW MASSES *15 Cents at Newstands*

NEW MASSES, 461 FOURTH AVE., N. Y. C.

Gentlemen: Please send me *New Masses* for twelve weeks at your special introductory rate of $1. I am enclosing this amount.

Name . . . . . .

Address . . . . . .

City and State . . . . . .

R

Fiction

RETREAT FROM OBLIVION, by David Goodis (Dutton, $2.50). The misguided love affairs of a group of people for whom the grass is always greener in someone else's pasture. Just goes to show that unhappy marriages can be just as dull as happy ones, and lost souls as colorless to read about as boy scouts.

AUTHORS IN PARADISE, by Alan Griffiths (Stokes, $2.50). A London cockney, after failing at the spiritualist-medium business, is suddenly hailed from the spirit land by a nut called Dean Swift. The ensuing scramble among publishers for the little fellow's masterpieces provides good clean fun at the expense of the literati—sprinkled with some first-rate puns.

LET ME BREATHE THUNDER, by William Attaway (Doubleday, Doran, $2). Some day there'll be a hobo in fiction who's really as tough as he looks; till then, like Mr. Attaway's heroes, they'll all have tender hearts under the cuss words and dirty faces. The two tramps here travel with a Mexican kid and a streak of bad luck. A simple, touching little tale.

APRIL WAS WHEN IT BEGAN, by Barry Benefield (Reynal and Hitchcock, $2.50). The characters aren't so whimsical as their names (Dik-Dik, Mole, Old Tiger)—but whimsical enough. Their headquarters are a Manhattan brownstone, their exploits impish enough to please anyone who'd rather be surprised than anything. By the author of "Valiant Is the Word for Carrie."

Contributors

MAX LERNER is professor of Political Science at Williams College, and author of "It Is Later Than You Think." A new book, "Ideas Are Weapons," is scheduled for fall publication.

ALSON J. SMITH, Religious Director of the American League for Peace and Democracy, is on a year's leave from the Grace Methodist Church, Waterbury, Connecticut. He has contributed articles to The Christian Advocate and The New Masses.

OLIVER H. P. GARRETT is a newspaper man and scenario writer now living in Hollywood.

HAMILTON BASSO has written three novels about the South, the most recent of which is "Days Before Lent," which Scribner's has just published.

F. C. WEISKOPF is a Czech journalist now living in the United States.

WALTON HAMILTON is professor of Law at Yale, and the author of several volumes on economic subjects. He is also a frequent contributor to legal and economic periodicals.

ELLA WINTER has devoted much time to the study of labor conditions in California. She was formerly a tutor at the London School of Economics. She is the author of "Red Virtue."

EDMUND WILSON is the author of "Axel's Castle," "The Triple Thinkers" and other books of criticism, poetry, drama, fiction and current history.

JERRE MANGIONE is an American of Italian descent who has worked in a publishing house and contributed to various magazines.

C. HARTLEY GRATTAN has recently returned from two years in Australia, where he lectured on a Carnegie Corporation grant, and collected material for a book in the Australian Commonwealth.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED